





## Donors pledge \$133m for '97 UNRWA programmes

AMMAN (J.T.) — Some \$133 million worth of contributions to support the regular programmes and other activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees in the Near East in 1997 was announced at the annual UNRWA pledging conference held at United Nations headquarters in New York on Dec. 5, a UNRWA press release said.

Delegates from 32 countries, representatives of the European Community and the Holy See, and the permanent observer of Palestine all reaffirmed their strong support for UNRWA's work in providing education, training, health, relief and social services for 3.3 million Palestine refugees, it said.

The president of the United Nations General Assembly, Ambassador Razali of Malaysia, formally opened the conference. UNRWA Commissioner-General Peter Hansen made opening and closing statements.

The major pledges made to support UNRWA's \$352 million General Fund budget for 1997 came from the United States, which pledged \$70 million; Sweden, which pledged 135 million Swedish krona (over \$20 million); and Norway which pledged \$5 million Norwegian kroner (about \$13.3 million), up from 70 million Norwegian kroner for 1996.

Others announcing major pledges were Germany (14 million Deutschmarks (some \$9 million)), the Netherlands (13 million Dutch guilders or \$7.5 million), and Switzerland which pledged nine million Swiss francs (nearly \$7 million). Kuwait pledged \$1.5 million and Saudi Arabia pledged \$1.2 million.

Other traditional major donors to UNRWA, including Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, the United

Kingdom and the European Community, made statements of support but were unable to announce pledges for 1997 due to parliamentary or budgetary procedures.

Two donors, Belgium and Turkey, said their pledges included funds earmarked for financing the move of UNRWA's headquarters from Vienna to the area of operations, which was carried out during 1996. The Netherlands designated some \$1.7 million worth of its pledge for UNRWA activities in Lebanon. The contribution from Germany includes 4.1 million Deutschmarks for projects.

Earlier, at an extraordinary meeting of major donor and host governments in Amman in September, donors responded to the commissioner-general's appeal regarding agency's financial crisis by pledging additional support for the agency's work in 1996. Contributions included \$5 million from the United States, 10 million Danish kroner (about \$1.8 million) from Denmark, 1 million pounds sterling (about \$1.55) from the United Kingdom, and \$1 million from Norway. Ireland pledged an additional amount of \$100,000 for 1996. Regarding the 232-bed European Gaza Hospital nearing completion, Denmark announced a \$8 million Danish kroner (about \$1 million) contribution and Germany pledged 2.4 million Deutschmarks (about \$1.7 million).

In his opening address to the conference in New York, Mr. Razali said: "We applaud UNRWA's commitment to improve the social and economic situation of the Palestine refugees in the agency's five fields of operation — Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He said UNRWA's work

was "cushioning the Palestine refugees from the effects of the long drawn-out Arab-Israeli conflict."

In his opening statement, Commissioner General Hansen said UNRWA had just gone through one of the most difficult periods in its recent history, with a budget deficit which had moved from cyclical to structural. "We may well scrape through 1997, or we may face another structural deficit of up to \$50 million. The choice is yours," Mr. Hansen told the delegates assembled in the Trusteeship Council chamber.

"Although we have so far avoided outright direct cuts in services, I would like to emphasize that the austerity measures UNRWA has imposed on itself since 1993, and again in mid-1996, have not been without impact on the quality and quantity" of agency services, Mr. Hansen said. Unless the structural deficit was corrected by massive donor intervention, the agency "would have to undertake a radical adjustment in its programmes in the coming period," he added.

At the conclusion of the pledging conference, the permanent observer of Palestine to the U.N., Nasser Al Kidwa, made a statement praising UNRWA's work and the commitment of its staff and thanking donors, particularly the United States, the European countries and the European Community. Japan and Canada.

Speaking at the close of the meeting, Mr. Hansen thanked those who had pledged or planned to pledge and said he would report on the results of the conference to a follow-up meeting of major donor and host governments to be held on Dec. 11 in Amman.



EXHIBITION OPENED: Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Monday inaugurates an exhibition of pottery, embroidery and handicrafts at the Beit Al Bawadi Centre. The show, which is organised by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development, displays pottery, embroidery and other Jordanian handicrafts and lasts until Dec.31 (Petra photo)

## Hebron University defy students closure

HEBRON (Agencies) — Palestinian students defied an Israeli closure order and broke into the campus of Hebron University on Monday to resume classes suspended since March, witnesses said.

The students broke through one of the gates to the campus in the West Bank town of Hebron and circulated around the grounds while chanting slogans demanding the reopening of the university, witnesses said.

Hebron University was closed in March after the first wave of suicide bombings by militants killed 59 people in Israel.

Israeli soldiers had not arrived at the scene and there were no reports of scuffles as the students entered the university grounds.

Palestinians complained against the closure which prevented around 1,500 students from resuming their higher education.

In October, the university dean defied the closure order by reopening the uni-

## Army allows 750 more Palestinian traders to enter Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli army authorised 750 additional Palestinian merchants to enter Israel as of Monday in its latest move to ease the damaging closure of the Palestinian territories, officials said.

An army spokesman said permits to enter Israel had been given overnight to 500 merchants from the Gaza Strip and 250 from the West Bank. On Sunday 800 such permits were given to businessmen from Hebron, the last West Bank city under full military occupation, and which had been largely excluded from earlier army moves to ease the closure.

A spokesman for the military administration in the territories said Monday's measure brought to 4,000 the total number of Palestinian merchants authorised to do business in Israel.

Israel has imposed tight restrictions on Palestinian businessmen and day labourers permitted into the country in recent years and has notably limited their number drastically since a spate of suicide bombings in February and March. The closure after those bombings prevented some 60,000 Palestinian day labourers from reaching their jobs in Israel.

A gradual easing of the measure in recent weeks has brought the number of Palestinians with work permits to 50,000, although many of those have been unable to find employment as their jobs were taken by foreign workers, officials said.

The Palestinian National Authority has said the repeated closures of the territories this year have cost an average \$7 to \$9 million dollars per day in lost income and revenues.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### American couple murdered in S. Arabia

RIYADH (AP) — An American couple was murdered by a disgruntled employee, who was captured before boarding a plane out of the country, a spokesman at the U.S. embassy said Monday. Berry Bailey, who worked at Riyadh's King Khaled International Airport, and his wife, Mary Ann, were stabbed to death Sunday by a Filipino employee, said the embassy spokesman, Samir Kouttab. The alleged killer was identified by Bailey, 50, before he died in hospital, Mr. Kouttab said. The man went to the victims' home Sunday evening to settle a personal grudge, Mr. Kouttab said. He stabbed Bailey, and attacked his wife when she tried to intervene. Mrs. Bailey ran to a neighbour's home and died there of her wounds, the spokesman said. The suspected killer was booked on a flight to the Philippines later Sunday, but was arrested by Saudi police, Mr. Kouttab said. The embassy would not give the hometown of the victims, but said they had adult children living in Texas. No other details were available. Mr. Kouttab said. The embassy spokesman stressed that the murders were not politically motivated. Security for the 20,000 Americans, including 5,000 troops, in Saudi Arabia has been tightened since 24 servicemen were killed in bombings in November 1995 and in June.

### Kurdish rebels release 6 Turkish soldiers

ANKARA (AP) — Six Turkish soldiers who were captured by Kurdish rebels 16 months ago have been released and are back from northern Iraq, where they had been held. The soldiers were handed over unconditionally to Fethullah Erbas, a deputy from the ruling Islamic Welfare Party, at a Kurdish rebel base in northern Iraq on Sunday, the daily Hurriyet reported on Monday. Kurdish rebels, fighting for autonomy in Turkey's southeast for 12 years, maintain bases in northern Iraq. Mr. Erbas, who said he was acting personally and not on behalf of his party, Welfare's coalition partner True Path had joined opposition parties in criticising Mr. Erbas. Turkish governments have refused to talk with the rebels at any level. The Kurdish conflict has claimed more than 21,000 lives since 1984.

### Quake jolts Iran town; no casualty

TEHRAN (R) — An Earthquake measuring 4.2 degrees on the Richter scale jolted the town of Boroujen in central Iran on Monday, but there were no immediate word on casualties or damage, the official news agency IRNA said. The quake, whose strength is enough to cause heavy damage in a populated area, occurred at 6.30 a.m. (0300 GMT). Quakes hit Iran regularly. The worst recorded one, measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale, killed 35,000 people in a densely populated region near the Caspian coast in 1990.

## Egypt introduces mandatory permit for mosque preachers

CAIRO (AFP) — The Egyptian parliament has passed legislation requiring mosque preachers to obtain special permits from the Egyptian authorities to preach in mosques.

The bill was passed Saturday by parliament and is widely seen here as a new effort by the authorities to clamp down on Muslim fundamentalist extremists in Egypt, government newspapers reported Monday.

It specifically compels preachers who are not employed by the ministry of religious affairs to obtain a licence in order to preach in the country's mosques. Al-Ahram daily said.

Violators will be fined 300 pounds (about \$100) and sentenced to one month in jail, the daily said.

Minister of Religious Affairs Hamdi Zaazou said the new law was necessary to ensure that qualified preachers only spoke in mosques, adding that personal views in mosques were unacceptable.

"It is necessary to organise the mosques and have qualified imams. There is no place for preachers who aspire to be leaders or achieve personal gains," he said.

He reiterated that Egypt's mosques would be placed under the control of the ministry over the next five years.

In October, Mr. Zaazou said the plan consisted in placing 30,000 mosques nationwide under government control by the year 2000 in a bid to avoid the propagation of "extremist" ideas.

On Saturday he said 7,500 mosques have already been placed under government control.

The authorities began clamping down on mosques nationwide after Muslim extremists launched in 1992 a violent anti-government campaign that has cost more than 1,000 lives.

## Tunisia takes Palestinian 'bomber,' will not say for how long

TUNIS (AP) — Tunisia has taken in a Palestinian convicted but freed early in the 1982 bombing of a U.S. jetliner, and would not say how long he may stay.

A Palestinian source in this country, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Friday that the Tunisian government had not decided whether to grant Mohammad Rashid temporary or "definitive" sanction.

Tunisian authorities and officials with the U.S. embassy in Tunis declined to comment on the affair.

Over the years, Washington repeatedly had asked Greece to extradite Rashid so he could stand trial in the United States. But on Thursday, Greek authorities deported him after he served just four years of a 15-year sentence.

Rashid was sentenced in 1992 to 18 years in prison in Greece — later reduced to 15 years — for planting a bomb on a Pan Am Jumbo jet flying from Tokyo to the United States. The bomb exploded as the plane was flying over Hawaii, killing a

Japanese teen-ager and injuring 15 others.

U.S. officials also want Rashid in connection with another bombing aboard a Rome-Athens TWA flight in April 1986. Four Americans, including a baby, died when they were blasted out of the jet as it flew over southern Greece.

The Palestinian source said he did not know what Rashid planned to do in Tunisia, or whether the U.S. government had formally asked Tunis to hand him over for trial. Rashid initially was to

be deported to the Palestinian-ruled West Bank or Gaza Strip, but he was apparently reluctant to travel there via Israel for fear of arrest and extradition to the United States.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was headquartered in Tunis for years and once had a staff of more than 1,000. It has moved most of its operations to Gaza, where Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is now based.

Greece had held Rashid in a maximum-security prison on the outskirts of Athens, but released him

on grounds of good behaviour.

The move angered Washington, which considers Rashid among the most-wanted men in the Middle East. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said earlier this week that Rashid "belongs behind bars."

U.S. officials are discussing what options they might have to get Rashid into U.S. custody, according to a law enforcement official in Washington, who requested anonymity.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 .....Budgie The Little Helicopter  
14:40 .....Comedy — I Love Lucy  
15:00 .....Sciences Cartoon  
15:15 .....Magazine — Montage  
16:00 .....At The Zoo  
16:30 Documentary on the occasion of the day of human rights  
17:00 .....News Flash  
17:01 .....Fun With Physics  
17:15 Drama — They Come From Outer Space

18:00 Serie — La Lumiere des Justes  
19:00 .....The Journal  
19:15 Magazine — Extra Large  
19:30 .....News Headlines  
19:35 .....Murphy Brown  
20:00 .....Magazine — Zero One  
20:30 .....Encounter  
21:10 Doc. — Lost Civilization  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:25 .....China Beach  
23:15 .....Mission Impossible  
23:59 .....Are You Being Served?

### PRAYER TIMES

04:57 .....Fajr  
06:19 .....Sunrise Dhuha  
11:28 .....Dhuhr  
15:13 .....Asr  
16:36 .....Maghreb  
17:57 .....Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweifeh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.  
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.  
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366  
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.  
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.  
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.  
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526  
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.  
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457  
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.  
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.  
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295  
English-speaking  
Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Relative cold weather conditions

will prevail with skies partly cloudy. There will be a chance for scattered showers and winds northerly moderate. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy. winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman .....07/14  
Aqaba .....642362  
Deserts .....05/16  
Jordan Valley .....11/20

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 90 per cent. Aqaba 48 per cent.

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY  
AMMAN:  
Dr. Nidal Al As'ad .....751673  
Dr. Khalid Klob .....816715  
Dr. Osama Al Hussini .....847289  
Dr. Issam Al Asmar .....890504  
Ferdows pharmacy .....778336  
Al Asema pharmacy .....637055  
Al Salam pharmacy .....636730  
Yacoub pharmacy .....644945  
Shmeisani pharmacy .....637660  
Nairokh pharmacy .....623672  
Najib pharmacy .....847632

### IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852

Al Quds pharmacy .....121

ZARQA:

Dr. Nabil Al Saffarini 901323

Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....637111

Civil Defence Dept .....661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....630341

Civil Defence Emergency .....199

Rescue Police 192 .....621111

637777

Fire Brigade .....617101

Blood Bank .....775121

Highway Police .....843402

Traffic Police .....896390

Public Security Department .....630321

Hotel Complaints .....605800

Price Complaints .....661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints .....897467

Amman Municipality Complaints .....787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) .....121

Overseas Calls .....010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs .....623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs .....661101

Jordan Television .....773111

Radio Jordan .....774111

Water Authority .....680100

Jordan Electricity Authority .....815615

Electric Power Company .....636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussain Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity .....642381/6

Aldih Maternity .....642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity .....642362

Malhas, J. Amman .....636140

Palestine, Shmeisani .....607071

Shmeisani Hospital .....669131

University Hospital .....845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali .....664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir .....775111/26

Army, Marka .....891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital .....674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery .....865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)909090

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital

### FOR THE TRAVELLER

#### QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

#### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15 .....Sana'a (RJ)

07:25 .....Damascus (RJ)

09:25 .....Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:05 .....Muscat, Dubai (RJ)

10:05 .....Beirut (RJ)

10:15 .....Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

11:00 Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)

15:35 .....Cairo (RJ)

15:55 .....London (RJ)

16:35 .....Frankfurt (RJ)

17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

18:30 Kuala Lumpur, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)

22:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)

22:15 Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)

03:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)

06:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)

#### Other Flights

07:30 .....London (KJ)

07:35 .....Damascus, London (BA)

11:30 .....Cairo (MS)

15:00 .....Kiev (6U)

15:45 .....Munich (YP)

17:40 .....Rome (AZ)

19:15 .....Dubai (EK)

22:50 .....Tel Aviv (LY)

00:40 .....Beirut, Amsterdam (KL)

01:00 .....Aden (IY)

01:55 .....Bucharest (RO)

### Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:50 .....Aqaba (RW)

17:15 .....Tel Aviv (RW)

20:20 .....Aqaba (RW)

### HJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

### MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple .....700/500

Banana .....550/550

Banana (imported) .....880/600

Cabbage .....70/50

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## Zairean rebels reportedly reach Ugandan border

KAMPALA (AFP) — Zairean rebels who control much of eastern Zaire have reached the town of Mpondwe, on the border with Uganda, and linked up with Ugandan government troops, according to press reports here Monday.

They said the mainly Tutsi rebels were taking up positions in the town and setting up camp by the border river after coming from Beni, a town 50 kilometres west of the border, that was captured last week.

Some 300 Ugandan troops who had been occupying the town of Kasindi near Mpondwe withdrew back into Uganda after the rebels arrived, the New Vision daily reported.

The Independent Monitor newspaper said a senior Ugandan military officer had spoken with the Tutsi rebels after their arrival.

Earlier Monday, the Tutsi rebels' security chief Paul Kabongo told AFP that they had seized the town of Bunia, further in from the border, which, if it is true, would be the northernmost town they have captured.

The rebels already control a swathe of eastern Zaire stretching several hundred kilometres from north of Goma to Uvira close to the border with Burundi.

Ugandan troops entered Zaire 11 days ago in pursuit of Zairean-based Ugandan

rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) — a combination of the fundamentalist Tabiq Muslim sect and remnants of the rebel National Army for the Liberation of Uganda — who first invaded Uganda on Nov. 13.

The monitor said 200 more ADF rebels had crossed into Uganda after the Zairean Tutsi rebels, known as Banyamulenge, occupied their bases at Ruwe and Kanongo Hills inside Zaire, and Ugandan troops destroyed their bases at Regeci, 35 kilometres inside Zaire.

However this was denied by Lieutenant-Colonel Jet Mwebazi, speaking from the Ugandan border region around Kasese.

Col. Mwebazi also said he believed 3,000 Zairean troops reported last week to have joined the Ugandan rebels had withdrawn.

"I don't think it is even true that they joined the rebels, but it is difficult to know what is happening on the other side of the border," he added.

Confirming the presence of the Tutsi rebels on the border, Col. Mwebazi said: "We met them on Sunday in Kasindi. We talked to them and they told us what was happening in the area, and then we pulled out all our troops."

He said the Zairean rebels, who are reportedly starting

to dig trenches in Kasindi, appeared organised and "cleaner than our soldiers. (they) were in good spirits and high morale."

Asked if he had discussed the situation with the ADF rebels with them, Col. Mwebazi added: "We talked and told them to do something about it."

"We hope the Banyamulenge, who ran into an ADF ambush as they headed for the border, will rout out the

Ugandan rebels from Zaire."

Col. Mwebazi said the Ugandans were planning to reopen the Mpondwe-Kasindi border in the near future.

Kasese market was reported Saturday to have been full of goods looted from Zaire after Ugandan civilians followed army troops into Kasindi last week and helped themselves to property there.

### 15,000 Rwandans leave camps in Tanzania — U.N.

NAIROBI (R) — About 15,000 Rwandan refugees have abandoned camps in northwestern Tanzania, apparently in defiance of a Tanzanian government campaign to repatriate them, a U.N. official said Monday.

Peter Kessler, a spokesman for the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR, said the refugees wandered off into the Tanzanian bush Sunday heading north and northeast, away from the Rwandan border.

Mr. Kessler said it was hard to guess at the intentions of the refugees but he linked their flight to the presence in the camps of the Interahamwe, the Hutu extremist militia which does not want the refugees to go home.

"They (the refugees) have been pressure from Interahamwe and so-called refugee leaders to ignore the Tanzanian government and not to go home. They (the Interahamwe) have been knocking on every hut, terrorising the refugees with scare stories about the situation back home," he told Reuters.

UNHCR and the Tanzanian government have given the 542,000 refugees in western Tanzania until the end of this month to go home. They have not said what will happen to those who refuse.

Mr. Kessler said the exodus from the two camps, Rubwera and Kigenyi, violated a Tanzanian rule that refugees should not stray far from the camps.

## U.N. sends new plane to collect stranded Tajiks

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Three days after he left Iran for northern Afghanistan's Kunduz province, Tajikistan's rebel leader Syed Abdul Nuri arrived Monday afternoon in Kunduz to begin peace talks aimed at ending a three-year civil war in his homeland, U.N. officials said.

Mr. Nuri was aboard a U.N. chartered aircraft that took off from Iran's eastern city of Mashhad Saturday destined for Afghanistan's Kunduz province to meet Tajikistan President Esmatullah Rakhmanov to open peace negotiations.

But the plane was intercepted by Taliban jet fighters as it entered Afghan air space and was forced to land at a military air base in Shindand in western Afghanistan.

The Taliban religious ar-

my that controls about two-thirds of Afghanistan said the U.N., which chartered the plane from Iran, had not received prior permission to enter Afghan air space.

"These people were illegally in Taliban territory," said Maulvi Abdul Salam, a Taliban spokesman in southern Kandahar. "They didn't inform us."

But U.N. officials said it was all a mistake.

"It was all just a big misunderstanding," said the U.N. official, who didn't want to be identified.

Mr. Nuri was expected to meet Mr. Rakhmanov later Monday in Kunduz city for a first round of peace talks.

Anti-Taliban forces rule in Kunduz and six other northern Afghan provinces.

Led by northern warlord Rashid Dostum and ousted military chief Ahmad Shah

Massoud, the anti-Taliban alliance is waging a fierce battle with Taliban soldiers north of the beleaguered Afghan capital.

Observers in Kabul say the Taliban forced the U.N. plane to land in Shindand because they suspected that ousted Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, who is in Iran, may have been aboard.

On Sunday the Taliban agreed to let the plane leave Shindand for neighboring Pakistan, but shortly after takeoff it developed technical problems and the pilot asked to land in Kandahar, about 380 kilometres south-east of the air base, the U.N. official said.

The crippled aircraft was allowed to fly to the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, but the passengers — all Tajiks — stayed in Kandahar.

There were initial reports that some of the people on board were Iranian, but the Taliban later said they were all Tajiks.

In recent public statements the Taliban has been critical of Iran accusing Tehran of supporting the anti-Taliban alliance. While Iran denies that, it has condemned the Taliban's harsh version of Islamic Law.

Iran also has been a long-time supporter of the Shi'ite group Hezb-e-Wahadat, which is part of the anti-Taliban alliance. The Taliban Movement, which began in southern Kandahar nearly three years ago is made up of mostly ethnic Pashtuns who are Sunni Muslims, like most Afghans.

Only about 15 per cent of Afghans are Shiite Muslims, like most Iranians.



Leaders of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, Russia, Boris Yeltsin, Belarus, Stanislav Shushkevich, Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, and Moldova, Mircea Snegur pose to photographers after signing a deal which had created a loose 12-member post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Kazakhstan's capital Almaty on Dec. 21 1991. On Dec. 8 that year Mr. Yeltsin, Mr. Kravchuk and Mr. Shushkevich struck a pact in Belarus forest resort of Belovezhskaya Pushcha which had become a death warrant to the Communist superpower (Reuter photo)

## CIS anniversary draws weak hardline protest

MOSCOW (R) — Barely 150 mostly elderly people gathered in Moscow to mourn the demise of the Soviet Union Sunday, the fifth anniversary of a pact that consigned the Communist superpower to history.

The demonstrators waved red flags and pictures of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin as they listened to denunciations of President Boris Yeltsin's economic reforms and the breakup of their vast multi-ethnic state into 15 independent republics.

"Mr. Yeltsin and his cronies are robbing the people, they are in the pay of the West. Their reforms are anti-Russian and against the people," one speaker told the crowd.

But no major opposition leaders joined the protests, a clear sign that restoring the Soviet Union five years on is virtually a lost cause even among diehard Communists.

The leaders of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine — the three Slavic core states — met at a Belarussian hunting lodge on Dec. 8, 1991 to inaugurate the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) that replaced the old Soviet Union.

The CIS groups all the

former Soviet republics except the three Baltic states — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Belarus' former president, Stanislav Shushkevich, who signed the pact with Mr. Yeltsin and Ukraine's then-leader Leonid Kravchuk, said Sunday he had no regrets about their decision.

"The Soviet Union was dead by then and we wanted to preserve what was good of it in the newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States," he told Russian television.

Ironically Mr. Shushkevich's successor as Belarus leader, Alexander Lukashenko, wants to rebuild a union with Russia.

Sunday's demonstrators expressed support for Mr. Lukashenko, who recently won sweeping powers in a controversial referendum, and said he should become leader of a reunited Russia and Belarus instead of Mr. Yeltsin.

Belarus is probably the only former Soviet republic where the population has consistently backed re-unification. Elsewhere independence had become irreversible in people's minds and hardly an issue for public celebrations or

protests.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has been a painful process for many of the nearly 300 million people that populated the vast country.

Hundreds of thousands, mainly Russians, have moved from many former Soviet republics fearing ethnic discrimination.

Trade links between the former parts of one huge centralised economy have been disrupted, aggravating economic crisis in most of them.

Mr. Yeltsin, the only one of the three signatories of the 1991 pact who still holds his office, has called for closer ties within the CIS.

"Integration in the CIS could move more swiftly and more effectively," Mr. Yeltsin said in a newspaper interview published Friday.

"I am speaking of the development of mutually advantageous relations, of working together, especially in industry, in trade and so forth. Here is an enormous field of activity."

The president is currently recovering from heart surgery at a country residence near Moscow.

## Adams urges Bruton, Major bridge gap over N. Ireland

LONDON (R) — Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams urged Britain and Ireland Monday to "bridge the gap of distrust" over Northern Ireland's faltering peace process at a London summit.

"There is always distrust there, it has to be bridged," the leader of the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) political wing said as Irish Prime Minister John Bruton flew to London for talks with British leader John Major.

The chances of a breakthrough look slim. Both Mr. Major and Mr. Bruton are beset by political woes at home and security sources have warned that the IRA, which abandoned its 17-month truce in February, may be planning a pre-Christmas bombing campaign.

The mutinous rumblings of "Euro-sceptics" who accuse Brussels of encroaching on British national sovereignty show no signs of dying down in the ruling Conservative Party.

Mr. Adams, whose party has been banned from peace talks until the IRA calls a permanent ceasefire, attacked Mr. Major who at the weekend insisted that the guerrilla group must call a genuine and sustainable truce before the deadlock is broken.

"Instead of building a

bridge, he deepened the gap," Mr. Adams said of Mr. Major's weekend comments.

Mr. Major sounded in no mood to compromise on Sunday.

"I'm not going down a fake path again... What I do not wish to see is a phoney ceasefire, a ceasefire simply to score public relations victories and to try and have Sinn Féin parachuted into the talks without actually giving up the violence."

Political problems abound on both sides of the Irish Sea.

Mr. Major's one-seat parliamentary majority evaporated Friday when a conservative lawmaker withdrew his support from the government in a row about a hospital ward closure.

The mutinous rumblings of "Euro-sceptics" who accuse Brussels of encroaching on British national sovereignty show no signs of dying down in the ruling Conservative Party.

Mr. Adams is now heavily dependent on the nine Ulster Unionist members of parliament who fervently want to maintain the pro-

vince's links with Britain and warn they will judge each vote in the House of Commons on its merits.

They will also be watching for any sign of Mr. Major going "soft" on Sinn Féin.

In Dublin, a list of payments to Irish politicians by a department store chain will be handed over to parliament this week, opening a new chapter in a row which has already forced one Irish government minister to resign.

Apart from their own domestic woes, relations between Mr. Bruton and Mr. Major have also soured.

Mr. Bruton was clearly angered two weeks ago when Mr. Major decided to set out the London government's current stance on the peace process ahead of securing Dublin's agreement.

Security sources fear that failure to kickstart the peace process could spark a renewed bombing campaign by the IRA whose last bomb attack in October killed one soldier and injured 30 people at the army headquarters in Northern Ireland.

One witness said he believed the pilot of the plane, flight KL483 from Rotterdam, had saved the lives of his passengers.

"It was very dramatic — my legs are still shaking even now," airport security guard Kailash Joshi said.

## 1 hurt as plane crash-lands in London

LONDON (R) — Forty-five passengers and crew escaped serious injury Sunday when a Dutch passenger plane crash-landed at London's Heathrow Airport, airline officials said.

Witnesses credited a quick-thinking pilot with preventing disaster and saving the 41 passengers and four crew.

Three passengers were treated for shock and one for a twisted ankle after the

landing gear on the left side of the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines NV Fokker 50 aircraft collapsed as the plane touched down, a KLM spokesman said in Amsterdam.

"The left-side landing gear collapsed during the roll-out at a speed of around 100 kilometres per hour," spokesman Peter Wellhuner said.

The pilot earlier reported to the control tower that the

left landing gear was failing to engage, but after several manoeuvres and a visual inspection from the ground was ordered to come in to land, Mr. Wellhuner added.

One witness said he believed the pilot of the plane, flight KL483 from Rotterdam, had saved the lives of his passengers.

"It was very dramatic — my legs are still shaking even now," airport security guard Kailash Joshi said.

## 12 Algerian extremists killed in raid

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Algerian security forces killed 12 armed Muslim extremists in a raid carried out in the Medea region, 80 kilometres south of Algiers, the daily Liberté reported Monday.

The fundamentalists were killed Sunday in two incidents in villages south of the Algerian capital, the paper said. Nine were killed in Ouled Antar and three others in the Chemi-guel district.

The Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the toughest of Algeria's fundamentalist extremists fighting the military-backed government, has carried out several attacks over the past few weeks in the region, which is home to its new leader Antar Zouabri.

Last week 29 people were killed in two villages south of Algiers, the Algerian Security Services said.

Security forces backed by aircraft have carried out a broad sweep in the region against suspected GIA bases.

No details of this operation have been released.

Meanwhile, a 28-year-old Muslim extremist who fought in Afghanistan and Bosnia has been chosen to lead the GIA group said Sunday.

Slimane Maherzi, also known as Abou Djamil, has replaced Antar Zouabri to lead the group's fight to install a fundamentalist Islamic government in Algeria.

It was not immediately clear why Mr. Zouabri was replaced, but he may have been killed by Algerian security forces, who have stepped up their operations against the militants in the past 15 days. More than 60,000 people have been killed in the 4 1/2-year-old insurgency.

Mr. Zouabri was considered responsible for the killings of dozens of Algerians who were not strictly observing Islamic Law. He in turn had replaced Djamel Zitouni, who was killed by security forces after being ousted as GIA leader in July.

Mr. Maherzi was chosen to purge "the opportunists and other wayward people" in the extremist rebel movement, the group said in a communiqué.

"Lead us on the path of those whom you have blessed with favours, not those who have incurred your anger," the communiqué said, quoting the Koran.

In the 1980s, Mr. Aberzi fought against the Soviet army in Afghanistan. He later joined the Muslim forces in the Bosnian civil war.

His elevation to lead the group is thought to strengthen the influence of Algerian veterans of the fighting in the former Yugoslavia.

The GIA issued the communiqué in the village of Benachour, near Blida, about 50 kilometres south of Algiers. Militants slit the throats of 29 people near Blida during the past week. More than 300 people have died in the region since Oct. 1.

There was no immediate comment on the GIA change in leadership from the army-backed government of President Liamine Zerroual.

The GIA was believed to have been behind the December 1994 hijacking of an Air France jetliner as well as a wave of bombings in France last year that left eight dead and 160 injured.

The GIA also is suspected in Tuesday's subway bombing in Paris, which killed three people and injured 87.

The militants have targeted the French for their financial support of the former colony, which remains an important trading partner.

The changes within the GIA came as the Organisation recently allied itself with the Islamic Salvation Front.

## Australian study links TV towers to leukaemia

SYDNEY (AFP) — The Australian government promised Monday to investigate the findings of a new study linking television station towers to childhood leukaemia.

Research published in the latest issue of the Medical Journal of Australia shows that children living around three Sydney television towers here died of lymphatic leukaemia at a rate almost three times the national average.

The research team, headed by Melbourne Doctor Bruce Hocking said it had found "an association between increased childhood leukaemia incidence and mortality and proximity to TV towers" over an 18-year period to 1990.

The towers, which have been broadcasting television services and emitting radio-frequency radiations (RFR) since 1956, are next to each other in a triangle in three of Sydney's most affluent suburbs: North Sydney, Willoughby and Lane Cove.

In those suburbs with a combined population of 135,000 the team found there had been 267 cases of lymphatic leukaemia among children aged up to 14 years and 847 cases of all types of leukaemia during the 18 years.

The incidence of lymphatic leukaemia was 2.7 times greater and of all leukaemia 2.3 times greater than in surrounding suburbs.

## Europe issue further threatens British Conservative government

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major faces a grim week, with rebel members of his Conservative Party set to take advantage of his lost majority in parliament to press home their attacks about Britain's position in Europe.

He will also have to deal with the troublesome problem of Northern Ireland and is scheduled to meet Irish Prime Minister John Bruton Monday to discuss a feared Christmas offensive by Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrillas.

Mr. Major went on national television Sunday to say he would not be bullied over the issue of Europe, but several Conservative "backbenchers" — members of parliament with no government posts — vowed to make trouble for him.

Polls show the Conservatives as much as 37 points behind the opposition Labour Party and, in a new blow, the one-time Conservative stronghold of Basildon in Essex indicated it, too, had deserted Mr. Major.

The Mori poll for the Sun newspaper showed only 24 per cent of voters there would choose Mr. Major's party in an election. Support for Labour skyrocketed from 42 per cent at the last election in 1992 to 61 per cent.

In the 1992 election the voters of Basildon pre-

dicted Mr. Major's unexpected win with early returns for the Conservatives.

The Mori poll showed that voters nationwide largely supported the rebellious Conservative MPs, with 64 per cent opposing British participation in a single European currency. Only 24 per cent favoured Britain staying in the European Union.

These are the issues that have split the Conservative Party. Mr. Major said he would not be shifted from a "wait-and-see" policy on Europe, arguing that Britain must keep its hand in negotiations with Brussels.

"We are not going to be held to ransom," Mr. Major said.

But the rebellious backbenchers have scented blood.

Mr. Major's one-seat parliamentary majority vanished Friday when Sir John Gort said he would no longer automatically vote with the government in a row over a hospital closure.

This means his government could be toppled at any time in a parliamentary vote.

Another malcontent, Terry Dicks, told Sky television: "He is going to have to wait and see how I play my hand now... If they had to vote tonight I would have brought the government down and to

hell with them."

The government is expected to lose even more with a by-election Thursday in Barnsley in northern England. Labour is widely expected to take that seat.

The European issue will not cool down anytime soon, either.

A two-day parliamentary debate on Europe starting Wednesday will give "Euro-sceptics" a fresh chance to air their grievances. Then a two-day EU summit starts Friday in Dublin where other leaders will push for more European integration.

An obviously gleeful Labour Party did not threaten an immediate challenge to Mr. Major's government, which can hang on — just — with the help of nine northern Irish Ulster Unionists.

But therein lies another problem for Mr. Major. The Ulster Unionists have been pressuring Mr. Major to keep the IRA's political wing Sinn Féin out of talks on the future of Northern Ireland.

Irish officials say this means Mr. Major can make no concessions on the issue when he meets Bruton Monday. And that, security sources say, could lead to a new round of IRA attacks in Britain, Northern Ireland and elsewhere.





Burmese students protest on a street outside their college in downtown Rangoon Dec. 9. About 100 college students staged a rally, the third time in a week, before being dispersed by riot policemen. Burma Monday accused member of the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), underground Communist activists and student exiles of instigating recent student protests (Reuter photo)

## Suu Kyi denies NLD link to Burma protests

RANGOON (R) — Burma's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi rejected government charges Monday that her party was linked to spreading student protests and called on the country's military rulers to seek new solutions to the unrest.

She was responding to accusations by a spokesman for the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council that some members of her National League for Democracy (NLD), communist elements and exiles were linked to the demonstrations.

"We have evidence that not only some NLD members but also members of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSD) and underground elements of the Burma Communist Party (BCP) are deeply involved in this unrest," a spokesman for the military government told Reuters.

The Bangkok-based ABSDF's membership is made up of students who have fled the country since an abortive uprising in 1988.

The BCP is outlawed in Burma.

"We are trying to flush out these elements as they come out to the front of unrest," the spokesman added. "We expect after a short period of time, things will return to normal."

Nobel Peace Prize winner Ms. Suu Kyi rejected the charge that the NLD, barred from taking power after winning the 1990 general elections, was involved in the protest.

"This is absolutely ridiculous. They should deal with their problems instead of trying to find someone else to blame," she said by telephone.

"They are never prepared to accept their responsibility as a government. This theory of conspiracy is totally out of date. We want some more modern approach to deal with the problems."

Witnesses said soldiers moved in Monday afternoon to disperse about 120 students who had staged a rally outside the gates of another university campus less than eight kilometres from the main Yangon (Rangoon) University.

It was not known if there were any arrests.

Other witnesses said there was an increased police presence around the U.S. embassy in downtown Rangoon.

Diplomatic sources said a number of students in Mandalay, 690 kilometres north of Rangoon, also demonstrated over the weekend, shouting anti-government slogans.

They said students of the Mandalay Institute of Technology organised a rally Sunday while the Mandalay Institute of Medicine had been sealed off by security forces.

No other details were immediately available.

On Monday, the military tightened its control of Rangoon, sealing off all campuses of the troubled university and the nearby Yangon Institute of Technology.

Earlier Monday, classes were suspended at the two schools and more than half of their boarding students left for their homes in the provinces.

"The situation looks definitely more tense with the stepped up measures," a western diplomat said.

Students from the two institutes last week staged some of the biggest protests since the 1988 pro-democracy uprising that the military crushed, leaving thousands dead or in jail.

The NLD and the student protesters have denied any links with each other during this latest unrest. Authorities briefly detained 860 students from two street protests in the past week.

The demonstrations were triggered by undergraduate complaints about police brutality in a brawl between institute students and the owners of a local restaurant in October.

The government has said two policemen involved in the case had been dismissed and given two-year jail terms, but students demanded the punishment be announced in newspapers.

## Hong Kong politicians chase seats on pro-China body

HONG KONG (R) — More than 100 politicians, including half of today's lawmakers, have sought seats on a controversial Beijing-controlled legislature in a move that may cripple Hong Kong's parliament in the twilight of British rule.

Before a registration deadline Monday, 112 people had applied to join the "provisional legislature," among them 33 members of the present elected Legislative Council (LEGCO).

Hong Kong reverts to China at midnight next June 30, and Beijing is pressing ahead — despite British objections — on setting up a provisional interim legislature to replace the elected LEGCO at the handover.

The provisional legislature will be selected on Dec. 21.

The territory of 6.3 million people now faces a bizarre prospect of having two legislatures for the final six months of British rule — one elected, legal and active, and a shadow "selected" chamber vulnerable to courtroom battles.

The number of seats on LEGCO and the new body is the same — 60. An official of the China-controlled committee supervising the three-week registration process said 217 people had requested application forms, so there could be more contenders at the last minute.

Among 33 incumbent lawmakers who have applied are LEGCO speaker Andrew Wong, whose bid started the political community last weekend and sparked fears that LEGCO could disintegrate.

"Cracks which have already emerged within the Legislative Council over the bid by some members for a seat on the provisional legislature will widen in the next six months," said political commentator Chris Yeung.

"When you have two bodies from which laws emanate at the same time, there's going to be some confusion and dispute," said analyst Michael Degolyer of Hong Kong's Baptist University.

Those wanting a seat in the new chamber also include 11 ex-lawmakers and 22 former election contestants defeated in 1995 elections in which pro-democracy groups led by the Democratic Party fared strongly.

The 1995 losers applying for a seat include prominent pro-Beijing politicians such as Tsang Yok-Sing, Peggy Lam and Elsie Tu.

Applicants also include 47 newcomers to legislative contests, many of whom are members of the hand-picked 150-member Preparatory Committee crafting the post-1997 Hong Kong power structures on behalf of China's Communist rulers.

Other newcomers are members of the 400-strong Selection Committee. This is the China-backed panel that will choose the first post-colonial leader Wednesday, with the winner forecast to be conservative-minded shipping tycoon Tung Chee-hwa. The committee will also be responsible for selecting the provisional legislative body on Dec. 21.

An opinion poll published Monday by the independent daily Ming Pao showed Hong Kong people split over the legitimacy of the provisional legislature.

## Biggest N. Korean defector group arrives in Seoul

SEOUL (R) — The biggest group of North Korean defectors since the 1950-53 Korean War arrived in Seoul Monday to take up asylum, six weeks after making a dramatic escape through China and Hong Kong.

The 17 refugees were all related and included a security guard whose job was to stop such defectors fleeing through the isolated North Korea-China border.

Their escape was financed by relatives in the United States who sent money to pay for guides to protect the group during the month-long trek down the length of China. They were passed from one safe house to another among the two million ethnic Koreans living there.

In a sign of changing times and growing nervousness about what a North Korean collapse could mean for Seoul's economy, the reception was low-key. Only a small crowd of mainly relatives was at Seoul's airport for the group's arrival on a Korean Airlines flight from Hong Kong.

South Korea will offer the family asylum and a modest payment. Seoul media have speculated each person will receive about 10 million won (\$12,000) to help them settle and find work, a sum that will not go far in high-cost South Korea.

On the eve of the group's departure from Hong Kong, South Korean media reports said two other North Koreans were also in the British colony waiting their turn for asylum in Seoul.

The sudden spate of refugees has put an unwelcome spotlight on Hong Kong as an escape centre for North Koreans just as the British colony enters the final months of its handover to China, one of Pyongyang's few allies.

"These cases are not the sort of problem they (British authorities in Hong Kong) need when they're tidying up the house," one Western diplomat said. "It's an awkward problem."

Most of the 17 escapees, who sneaked into Hong Kong 16 days ago after making their escape from North Korea on Oct. 26, looked sombre.

Earlier reports had said the security guard was not a member of the family, but during questioning it emerged he was related and was the ringleader of the group in their flight.

South Korea once rolled out the red carpet for defectors, but their growing number is starting to cause concern that a sudden crackup of the Stalinist nation is possible.

Some recent defectors have been weak and emaciated, reflecting near-famine conditions in much of the North, which is struggling to survive the effects of floods and industrial collapse.

An uncontrolled refugee exodus, signalling a breakdown of internal controls — similar to the German experience — is part of a nightmare scenario for Seoul, which would be left to pick up the pieces from any collapse in the North.

The South Korean government is drawing up plans for reception centres for North Koreans, half-way houses that will offer immediate shelter and vocational training. The first such centre could be ready next year.

In a separate development, twenty South Korean military personnel face disciplinary action over the intrusion of a North Korean submarine in September that exposed gaping security holes and embarrassed South Korea's armed forces.

An announcement by the Joint Chiefs of Staff Monday said the 20 faced disciplinary action for failures in guard duty, botching parts of the search for the 26 North Koreans agents who came ashore, and for friendly fire deaths during the hunt.

Two of the personnel face legal action, seven have been referred to disciplinary tribunals, three relieved of their duties and eight given warnings.

## Court rulings, arrests push Belgrade toward confrontation

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Opponents accused Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic of choosing confrontation over compromise by arresting protesters and refusing to give back their election victories.

The opposition forces pledged to keep fighting peacefully, and to spread their demonstrations to dozens of cities and towns across Serbia.

One opposition leader, Vuk Draskovic, told Associated Press Television that the choice was to fight for human dignity and freedom, or to be Mr. Milosevic's slaves.

"We are not ready to be slaves," he said.

After several days of hope, lawyers for the opposition coalition Zajedno, or Together, said they expected to lose all 33 appeals to the Serbian Supreme Court. Both the coalition and the Belgrade City Election Commission had appealed lower court rulings annulling the opposition's victories in municipal elections on Nov. 17.

No decisions were announced officially Sunday by the Supreme Court.

But the Election Commission was told overnight that five appeals had been rejected, commission observers said.

Goran Draganic, a legal expert for the opposition Democratic Party, said he expected all the appeals to be denied. The coalition's 33 appeals were among a total of 46 filed after the Nov. 17 vote.

Thousands of students gathered again Sunday in central Belgrade for another protest march.

The Democratic Party, a coalition member, reported that eight protesters had been arrested in the past two days, including a 21-year-old worker it said had been beaten and denied medical attention in jail.

It said the young man, identified as Dejan Bulatovic, had been one of several protesters who had stood on a jeep carrying an effigy of Mr. Milosevic dressed in a prison uniform.

Mr. Draskovic warned that despite assurances Mr. Milosevic gave Saturday that he would not use force, he may be prepared to send in the army and police.

It had seemed that Mr. Milosevic would use the Supreme Court to try to quell the protests by returning the Belgrade election victory. But the Democratic Party leader, Zoran Djindjic, said the demonstrations had transformed themselves from a protest about the elections into a movement against Mr. Milosevic and the Communist policies he follows.

The question now, he said, is whether the determination of the protesters or Mr. Milosevic's patience would give out first.

Mr. Djindjic said that in the next two weeks he expected protests to spread to about 50 Serbian cities and towns, including communities where Mr. Milosevic's Socialists hold power.

On Saturday, independent trade unions threatened to go on strike early next week, a move that could dramatically strengthen the protests.

Besides the opposition's political demands, leaders of two unions were also demanding that the government ensure decent living standards.

Individual workers have taken part in the street marches, but organised labour has not so far.

Grievances over unemployment, poor living conditions and low wages may be as damaging to Mr. Milosevic as complaints about civic freedoms.

Many of Serbia's factories are idle, and hundreds of thousands of workers are on paid leave because of lack of raw materials and other failures of Mr. Milosevic's economy.

Economic sanctions imposed after Mr. Milosevic instigated wars in Bosnia and Croatia hurt badly. So have mismanagement and inefficiency. Mr. Milosevic has shown little interest in breaking up the state-run economy and privatising the factories. Average wages are often no more than the equivalent of \$100 per month.

## Terror trial fuels new fears after Paris blast

PARIS (AFP) — Security was tight Monday for the opening of the trial of 34 suspected Islamic fundamentalist terrorists, less than a week after a bomb on a Paris commuter train killed four people.

The trial of a group of Muslim extremists accused of backing a Moroccan guerrilla group has further fueled fears of a new campaign of terror in the French capital.

There has been speculation the new attack, which raised the spectre of a return of last summer's wave of violence in the French capital, was linked to the opening of Monday's trial.

The defendants, mostly of North African origin, are accused of establishing a terror network in France which was in particular behind an attack in Marrakech in August 1994 which killed two Spanish tourists.

They were among hundreds of suspects arrested after a wave of terror blasts last summer, claimed by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which killed eight people and injured more than 150.

Not all of the 34 defendants were to appear in court. More than a dozen of them are still at large. They are specifically charged with "collaborating with criminals in a terrorist enterprise."

The key defendant is 38-year-old Moroccan Abdul Ilah Ziyad, known as "Rachid," described as the leader of the network which organized terror training in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the late 1980s.

He is suspected of having sent four commando groups — made up of militants recruited in French suburbs seen as hot-beds of Islamic fundamentalism — to north Africa in 1994 to carry out a number of attacks.

Meanwhile the death toll in last week's Paris bombing at Port Royal Station rose to four Sunday. Younes Slimane Nait, 30, who was injured in Tuesday's bombing, died in a Paris hospital.

Ninety-one people were injured of whom 19 were still in various hospitals Sunday.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack, but investigators suspect it was the work of Algerian extremists who oppose France's support for Algeria's military-backed government.

One press report Monday said police had made a photo-fit likeness of a suspect wanted over the Port Royal blast, indicating that a witness had identified a North African man about 30 years old and of medium height.

## NATO approves plan for new force in Bosnia

BRUSSELS (AFP) — NATO ambassadors Monday approved plans to replace the peacekeeping force in Bosnia with a smaller follow-up contingent starting on Dec. 20, a NATO official said.

The official stressed that this approval is preliminary and that the new force will only be formalised once the U.N. Security Council gives the alliance a mandate to continue its mission in Bosnia.

Alliance foreign ministers will endorse the provisional approval at a winter session Tuesday and Wednesday at NATO Headquarters here.

The new force, to be called SFOR, will comprise 31,000 troops. It would have an 18-month mandate.

As with IFOR, around 30 countries will take part in the new operation — dubbed Joint Guard — which will come into force "on Dec. 20 at 11 a.m. local time" and will be reviewed after six and then 12 months, the official said.

Countries that are not members of NATO have been informed of the new plan, which is divided into four phases.

The first involves deployment of SFOR and a 5,000-strong reserve in neighbouring countries, which should be completed in February. Then, a second phase of "stabilisation," closely coordinated with civilian efforts, will last until autumn 1997.

A third phase, of "disengagement," will take place between the end of 1997 and the spring of 1998, during which force numbers will be reduced.

And finally, a fourth phase will take place between April and July 1998 with the withdrawal of the force and a halt to aid for civilian organisations.

## Washington to make concessions to Moscow, not Paris, at NATO

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States was expected to confirm at this week's NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels that it is ready to make concessions to persuade Russia to accept the alliance's eastward expansion.

But the United States will not make concessions to France on reforming the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The annual meeting of the 16-member security arrangement will take place Tuesday and Wednesday.

U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry had told journalists late Wednesday that he felt NATO should make it clear to Russia that the alliance had no plans to expand its nuclear weapons deployment.

"I think NATO can and should make a very direct statement: 'We have no plans to expand the nuclear base in NATO and no need to expand the nuclear base in NATO,'" Mr. Perry said.

"We should do what we can to assure the Russians" of NATO's good intentions.

But the Russian foreign ministry dismissed the proposed pledge as "inadequate."

"Such a declaration will only be an intention, that is inadequate," foreign ministry spokesman Vladimir Andreiev said.

Moscow wants a formal statement pledging that NATO will not expand nuclear as well as conventional forces in the territory of the new members.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was to meet with his Russian counterpart Yevgeni Primakov to discuss the issue.

The NATO ministers were also expected to announce the July date for another NATO summit in Brussels, at which they will decide which countries will become the alliance's newest members.

Another important item on the agenda will likely be the U.S.-French row over NATO's southern command, based in Naples, Italy, and currently headed by an American.

France wants the command to come under European control to create a European defense identity within the alliance in the post-cold war world.

France has made the move a condition for its return to NATO's joint military manoeuvres, which it left some 30 years ago.

But the United States has refused to cede control of the strategic Mediterranean and Mideast regions, where the U.S. Sixth Fleet is based.

Mr. Perry said Wednesday that the United States "will not change our view on that issue."

"We just sharply, clearly disagree on that issue," he said.

And State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the issue would not be resolved at the upcoming meeting in Brussels.

"I don't think the Congress of the United States or the American people would understand," he said, adding "the Sixth Fleet is an American fleet, it ought to be commanded by an American, it's always been commanded by an American."

The fleet is part of NATO forces, but would only come under NATO command in the event war breaks out.

The Nov. 5 elections that gave Democratic President Bill Clinton a second term also gave the Republican Party the majority in Congress, and the Republicans are opposed to sending U.S. troops abroad, even under U.S. command.

## Nazarbayev: Central Asia wary of fundamentalism

NEW DELHI (R) — Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said Monday that the Central Asian republics were opposed to the spread of Muslim fundamentalism in the region.

"None of the Central Asian states wants fundamentalism to permeate their societies," Mr. Nazarbayev, commenting on strife in Afghanistan, told reporters at the start of a three-day visit to India.

Mr. Nazarbayev was given a colourful reception at Delhi's British-built presidential palace. He was due to hold talks with President Shankar Dayal Sharma and Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda later Monday.

Asked to comment on the Afghan conflict, Mr. Nazarbayev said: "The Central Asian countries for years have been brought up on a notion of atheism."

He said developments in Afghanistan had been closely reviewed by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including Russia.

He said the CIS had made its own evaluation of the situation in Afghanistan, including the stance of the Islamic Taliban Movement that seized the Afghan capital Kabul in late September.

"However, these events are happening in the neighbouring countries. We believe those are internal affairs of those countries," he said without elaborating.

Mr. Nazarbayev was asked if Kazakhstan shared India's view that the Taliban were a fundamentalist Muslim group.

"I cannot take a position. However, I am free to do that judging by the actions that they are taking," he said.



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### Displacement of hope

IN YET another sign of its recalcitrant approach to the peace process, the Israeli government failed to attend the meeting of the four-party committee on Palestinian displaced persons which was held in Gaza on Sunday. Israel's excuse for boycotting the meeting, the first in nine months, lacks even the pretence of genuineness. What technical reasons could prevent Israeli representatives from attending a meeting that is not empowered to making decisions, albeit it is tackling one of the most thorny issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The committee, which was established by the Madrid peace conference, is entrusted with working towards a resolution to the problem of Palestinians who were displaced as a result of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. The return home of these people, whose number is estimated by the Arabs at 800,000, is called for by the Oslo accords. But Israel, in its meetings with other committee members (Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian National Authority) has rejected to even acknowledge the number, let alone take any real steps towards their repatriation.

Israel's absence from the Gaza talks is another alarming indication of the sort of policies that could wreck the whole peace effort. It provides another unneeded proof that the Netanyahu government is not in a hurry, to put it mildly, to talk business in order to achieve real progress.

The problem of the displaced Palestinians is a serious matter that has to be resolved if there is going to be just, lasting and fair settlement in the region, based on undoing the injustices which Israel has inflicted on the Palestinians. But the issue is much less complicated than the larger one of refugees — Palestinians who were driven out from Palestine when Israel was established in 1948. The refugee problem is supposed to be tackled in the final status talks which have been postponed due to Israel's intransigence and reneging on commitments.

The Israeli stand on the displaced persons is a scary indication of the attitude that Israel would apply when dealing with refugees. If Israel is unwilling to cooperate on an issue which it had already agreed to resolve by allowing Palestinians to go back to their homes, it is much less likely that the Jewish state will take positions conducive to the resolution of more complex problems that have yet to be fully and comprehensively addressed.

Time and again Israel is failing to make gestures of goodwill which are necessary to maintain the faith in the peace process. That can lead to only one conclusion: more frustration and disappointment for all peoples in the Middle East. At one point, many in this region believed that the peace process was irreversible. That is not certain any more, especially when even contractual rights are not respected. Let us hope time will prove that those who are growing more sceptical, by the day, are wrong.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i Monday urged the whole Arab Nation to back the renewed efforts of Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), aimed at achieving reconciliation between Iraq and the rest of the Arab countries and said that the efforts come from a wise leader, keen on protecting his nation's interests. Samir Qatani said that Sheikh Zayed had made a previous call to the Arabs, urging them to end the sufferings of the Iraqi people because he believes differences can only weaken the Arabs and allow the nation's enemies to dominate their destiny. Sheikh Zayed realises that all the Arab countries, especially the oil-rich nations, are exposed to danger and that the foreign powers which rallied to liberate Kuwait came to the Gulf to protect their own interests only and not those of the Arab states, said the writer. It is because Iraq has been weakened that the military balance in the Gulf has been shaken, that Turkey is freely invading northern Iraq and Iran is consolidating its hold on the Arab Gulf islands, added the writer. The UAE president also realises that it is due to the Arab countries' weakness that Mr. Netanyahu is disregarding their rights and that Kuwait, which will always be a neighbour to Iraq, has no alternative but to make peace with its northern neighbour, said the writer. He added that the Arab states in general and the Gulf countries in particular ought to rally behind the UAE in ending the embargo on Iraq and the differences that have been plaguing the Arab Nation.

A WRITER for Al Dustour criticised the official Jordanian policies with regard to the ties with Israel, saying that they were based on dreams that have never come true. Taher Adwan cited the minister of industry and trade as reporting that trade with Israel, since the peace treaty of 1994, did not exceed JD 3 million at a time when Israel continues to control the economy of the West Bank and Gaza, selling them \$2 billion worth of Israeli products annually and preventing Jordan from trading with the self-rule areas. At the same time, Jordan is realising now that its economic interests lie with Iraq and the Gulf states, with Syria and Lebanon, he said. The writer noted that the dreams of a U.S.-Israel-Jordan cooperation and the establishment of a Middle East development bank were mere fantasies, and the dreams of a Red Sea-Dead Sea canal which would benefit the kingdom remains a mere dream that can never be fulfilled. The writer said it is enough with the official policies that are not based on solid facts but tend to soar in a world of fantasy that can never be translated into concrete facts on the ground.

### The View from Fourth Circle

## On Malcolm Rifkind, Emperor Trajan and chicken chop suey

By Rami G. Khouri

THE MIDDLE East, it seems, is once again up for grabs; well, if not totally up for grabs, it sure seems ripe for a redrawing of alliances and orientations, which necessitates a new organisational structure or configuration. British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind has recently made the intriguing suggestion that the states of the greater Middle East (the Arabs, Iran, Turkey and Israel — or at least those of them that behave according to London manners and rules) should consider forming a pan-regional organisation that could promote peace, reconciliation, stability and progress. His idea joins a list of other grandiose suggestions, all of which seem to share the pressing need to repackaging our region in more comprehensible terms. It is flattering to be the subject of such persistent and global attention. But is it healthy?

I must confess that I am genetically suspicious when European foreign ministers propose political arrangements for the Middle East — not just because we received very little shoreline and fresh water resources when Euro-arrangers last fiddled with our map around 1920, but also because the whole exercise smacks slightly of a dubious combination of post-colonial colonialism, unnecessary arrogance, uncomfortable meddling and — history generally attests — rather faulty handiwork and distorted statehood at the end of the day, or the century, or whatever time span one uses to measure such map-making and people-tinkering.

The time span for this sort of thing is rather long, so we should not merely dismiss it as contemporary quirkiness. Ever since the Roman General Pompey marched into this region in 63 BC and created the Province of Syria, followed in 106 AD by the Emperor Trajan's rearrangement of the region by the creation of the new Province of Arabia, foreign powers have always felt the need to arrange or configure the Middle East in a manner that combines neatness with utility. Perhaps this is related to the organisational instincts of the Western mind, or perhaps to the obvious need for Westerners to relate to Middle Eastern states and peoples in a compartmentalised manner — to rearrange, perhaps even to manufacture the Orient, the Arabs and Islamism in such a way that we suffer no vagueness, but only order, clarity and affiliations neatly pinned onto the lapels of appropriately grey business suits.

The post-World War I transition from Ottoman to British and French domination of the Middle East was the last major regional territorial retooling of this region since the Ayyubid/Mameluke era. We enter today a new period of change that will require new interpretations of concepts like frontiers and sovereignty — because we can only meet pressing human needs by promoting economic expansion and environmental stabilisation via much greater regional and global interaction, even integration. The question is: What kind of regional redefinition will we experience? And, will we determine the broad lines of our future national destinies, or will we again mainly react and adjust to imperatives designed by others, primarily for their convenience?

Mr. Rifkind, unlike his predecessor of Sykes-Picot infamy, had the grace and honesty to offer a suggestion,

rather than to cook up a secret deal and impose it by force of imperial arms. Thanks, Malcolm. Whether this is a sign of British maturity, wisdom, decency, or post-imperial weakness remains for historians to decide. Our job is to take up Mr. Rifkind's suggestions and discuss them with the same degree of seriousness with which he offered them.

His proposal for a greater Middle East structure on the lines of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, perhaps to be called the Organisation for Cooperation in the Middle East (OCME), raises the critical question of how the peoples and states of the Middle East see themselves working together in the future. It comes in the historical wake (I use the word in both of its senses, i.e., a trail and a deathwatch) of a bounty of pan-Arab, pan-Islamic and pan-Middle Eastern organisations since mid-century that have largely failed to register any significant achievements other than, perhaps, cooperation on child vaccination issues, common transit procedures for third country freight trucks, and some long-term, low-risk financing of infrastructural projects by Arab and Islamic development funds.

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Mr. Rifkind may desire sincerely to suggest a route to a better future for us; but in venturing into the territory of pan-Middle Easternism, he enters into a graveyard of well-intentioned but failed organisational and national aspirations.

The fact is, the people of the Middle East today — particularly in the Arab World — explore future configurations and associations with the same dexterity with which

we peruse our options, say, for good quality Italian or Chinese restaurants in Amman. With the Rifkind proposal, we have eight alternatives on the table: the OCME idea, a pan-Arab structure, a pan-Islamic concept, the New Middle East proposal of Shimon Peres and others, sub-regional groupings (like the struggling Gulf Cooperation Council, the part-time Maghreb Arab Union, and the failed Arab Cooperation Council), the broad concept of a Euro-Arab context and the even wider idea of a Euro-Mediterranean structure. The eighth one that may have started to come into play in parts of the Gulf, North Africa and the Levant is the Herodian option — securing one's future not in indigenous regional integration, but in vassalage and tutelage to imperial powers far away. For all its problems and discomforts, this last option has always been part of this region's geo-political history, and we should not be so naive as to wish it away or to ignore it when it rears its funny little Herodian head.

In regional configurations, as in quality restaurants, we have many attractive options today. This is a bountiful sign of our hard work and God's mercy on us in the field of gastronomy, but when it comes to regional strategic and politico-economic configurations it is slightly worrying to have so many options. It suggests one of three things to me: that the options are not practicable and serious as organisational frameworks, that we are not mature and serious as viable states, or that a new struggle is under way for the future heart and soul — and water, oil, gas, minerals, labour, markets and economy — of the Middle East.

History suggests that such grand Middle Eastern regional retoolings and overhauls are both frequent and natural — and that throughout history they have been accomplished by the alternating will of indigenous powers and foreign empires. We should not necessarily be worried that we face such a rich menu of options for our future identity and configuration. We should only be worried if most of the options came from foreign quarters rather than from our own societies, and if in the face of such external ideas for our fate we only end up hoping for longer shorelines, deeper aquifers and continuously merciful gods. As far as I can tell, three of the eight options above originate in the Arab World: but all three — pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism, and sub-regional Arab groupings — have fared least well.

It is no surprise, therefore, that the menu of our destiny continues to grow. Mr. Rifkind's proposal, while not acceptable to many Arabs in its present form, deserves serious consideration, modification and refinement. The easy thing for us to do is to reject it out of hand. The smart thing for us to do would be to come up with a better proposal. The long overdue thing for us to do is to politically engage the Malcolm Rifkind of our world — and our long history — in an honest, respectful and mutually satisfying dialogue that responds to our common interests and our particular needs. If we in the Arab World do not do this, someone else is likely to do it for us, as they have done before.

## Algeria, Belarus, Serbia — democracy vs other needs

By Gwynne Dyer

M. KAHIL

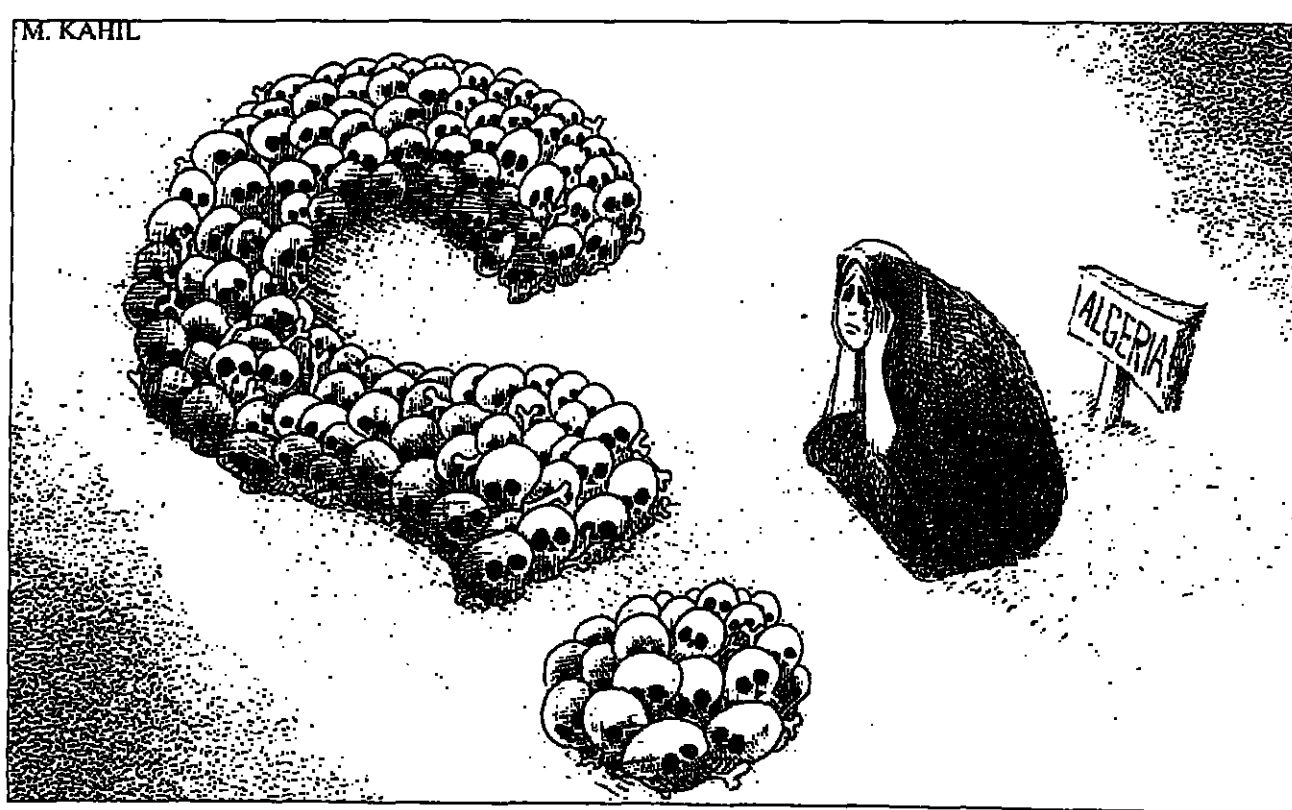
AFTER A gap of several years, there it was on our screens once again: the trademark political technique of the late 20th century. Day after day, tens of thousands of Serbs were standing in silence in the snow, protesting President Slobodan Milosevic's blatant rigging of last month's local elections. Within a week, even Milosevic's continued hold on power was being called into doubt.

It could not happen to a nicer guy. Milosevic's 9-year reign has impoverished Serbia and caused devastating wars in both Croatia and Bosnia. His politics are a lethal mixture of rabid nationalism and old-fashioned Marxism. It would be a very good thing if Serbs used the moral jiu-jitsu of non-violent protest to drive him from office and bring democracy to that sad and paranoid country.

But look more closely. The leaders of the democratic protest in Serbia, Zoran Djindjic and Vuk Draskovic, are nationalists every bit as rabid as Milosevic. Djindjic even campaigned for Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, an indicted war criminal, in the recent Bosnian elections. They may want democracy, but they are not very interested in the human rights of non-Serbs.

Then look at Belarus, where late last month over 70 per cent of the voters democratically voted to hand over supreme power to President Alexander Lukashenko, a former collective-farm boss and full-time petty tyrant.

They gave Lukashenko the new constitution he wanted, gutted the parliament and courts that had previously acted as checks on his untrammelled power, and even extended his term for two years, until 2001. It is



only half a decade since the Belarussians emerged from the 74-year night of Soviet rule; now they have retreated back into the cave. People in Serbia demanding democracy so they can hate their neighbours more efficiently, people in Belarus voluntarily handing their new democracy over to a bush-league dictator... and then, there is Algeria, where voters approved a new constitution on Nov. 28, that, among other things, bans all political parties "founded on a religious, linguistic, race, gender, corporatist or regionalistic basis."

Algeria has lost tens of thousands of people to terrorism since its first (and last) genuinely free election in 1992, when a fundamentalist religious party almost won power away from the ruling military elite and their civilian allies. But the army panicked and cancelled the second round of the elections, whereupon the disappointed fundamentalists

declared open war on the regime and its supporters.

Around three-quarters of eligible Algerians turned out for last month's election, despite threats by Islamic militants to kill people who voted. Eighty-nine per cent of those who voted backed the ban on religious parties in Algeria. Yet most of the same voters must have backed the fundamentalists four years ago, or else the fundamentalists wouldn't have been on the verge of winning.

First a majority of Algerians were ready to vote for a fundamentalist regime that would probably have ensured that there was never another free election. And only a few years later, they are willing to vote for a new and quite undemocratic constitution that bans exactly the party they previously backed.

This is democracy? And if it is, who needs it?

Democracy does not make people wiser or more gener-

ous or more loving than they are. It was devised to give the weak some protection from the strong, by giving their numbers political importance, and even to give them some small voice in their own fate."

*"Democracy does not make people wiser or more generous or more loving than they are. It was devised to give the weak some protection from the strong, by giving their numbers political importance, and even to give them some small voice in their own fate"*

By and large, European countries have a good track record with democracy since the end of the cold war. Of the 52 countries in Europe,

many of them new and unstable, only a handful fall far short of normal democratic standards: Serbia, Slovakia, Belarus, Bulgaria and Azerbaijan.

At least a dozen other countries in Europe are also experiencing severe social disruption and grave economic hardships as they recover from decades of

Four years ago, a majority of poorer Algerians voted for the fundamentalists because they thought that might bring change in the desired direction. Forty thousand killings later, they are willing to vote the way the regime likes, if that will just end the killing. For Algerian voters, there are no good choices.

The more important fact (which gets far less attention) is that around 70 per cent of the world's people now live in democracies, up from only 30 per cent a short generation ago. Democracy is not losing. It is winning all over the world.

but the poverty and the violence are much worse there too.

Ideas are not responsible for the actions of those who espouse them. Serbs may want democracy, but that does not change the fact that Serbian nationalism has had a strong strand of paranoia and self-pity for at least the past two or three generations. (Some would argue for much longer.)

Many Belarussians want democracy too, but at the moment a rural majority simply wants to be led out of their misery by some strong leader. For more prosperous and sophisticated people, like the Germans in the 1930s, have fallen into the same trap.

And what about the Algerians? They would quite like democracy, if that was really on offer, but above all they want safety — and, if it is not asking too much, a bit of prosperity too.

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But the fact that Serbs and Belarussians and Algerians are not saints, and not always brave in the face of adversity, does not demonstrate some basic flaw in democracy. There is no system that works flawlessly, all the time, regardless of circumstances and of chance.

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## GCC summit warns Israel over peace process, Iran over its weapons buildup

DOHA (AFP) — Gulf Arab leaders warned Monday that they could break off relations which some of them have begun to establish with Israel and accused Iran of a dangerous military buildup in the region.

In an abrupt toughening of their stand, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) leaders rejected Israel's headline approach to the Middle East peace process "which could force them to review measures already taken toward Israel."

Qatar and Oman this year

opened trade ties with the Jewish state, but froze further steps toward normalisation to protest the hardline policies of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The four other GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — have refrained from establishing ties with Israel, although they support the Middle East peace process.

The GCC leaders, whose annual summit here was boycotted by Bahrain amid a territorial dispute with

host country Qatar, said they would rescind steps to normalise ties if Israel continued "to block the peace process."

They urged Israel to respect signed accords with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), withdraw from the West Bank town of Hebron as well as East Jerusalem, stop settlements, and lift the blockade on Palestinian areas.

They also called for Israel to resume negotiations with Syria and Lebanon as well as withdrawal from the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon.

The GCC expressed "strong fears over Iran's deployment of surface-to-surface missiles in the Gulf, including on three United Arab Emirates islands, which amounts to a direct threat to (Gulf) states."

They regretted that "Iran continues to arm itself heavily and acquires weapons of mass destruction and non-conventional arms," which they said "exceeded its legitimate needs."

## King puzzled over Israelis' behaviour

(Continued from page 1)

been achieved and return to the unknown where everything can happen.

Q: If Your Majesty speak out, are you worried about the non-conventional weapons in our area?

A: I am worried about the mood, the frame of mind of people, which, if things continue the way they are, will have fear and suspicion replace confidence and optimism and determination. When that happens, when the psychological moment is reached when people feel that nothing is happening, I think that all of us would suffer a tremendous loss.

Q: Let us assume that Hebron issue is behind us, what is next?

A: I hope the plans to continue with the peace process are drawn up.

Q: Let us get into the specific possible arrangements. Are Your Majesty referring to the full withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank?

A: That is not for me to say. The West Bank is occupied territory but that is the responsibility now of our Palestinian brethren. We parted ways when we gave them the opportunity to move on their own regarding the agreements they had made with the government of Israel and which reflected the Palestinian desire and will to be able to speak for themselves regarding their future and their rights on their land. So I naturally expect that whatever was left for the final status negotiations will be the subject of discussion and negotiations between the two sides to arrive at a balanced solution that will satisfy all concerned.

Q: What is Your Majesty's point of view on the settlement issue? Will they remain in the West Bank and will the settlers live together with Arab neighbours?

A: It depends. If the atmosphere that prevails in the future and the state of peace is one of mutual respect, not of treating each other with disdain or looking down at each other in any form or way, then in a state of peace people can move in the entire region I believe, as they did in the past. However, the settlements were always illegal as far as the international consensus is concerned, and that is a problem that has to be discussed with the Palestinians at the right time according to the schedule that was set.

Q: Would you like to see an independent Palestinian state between Israel and Jordan?

A: If that is the desire and will of the Palestinians certainly we will bless it. We will help them in any way we can in that regard. I think, sir, that throughout this part of our, Palestinians have felt that they never had the chance to speak for themselves, to have an identity, as close as they are to us, this is a fact, and I am sure that our ties will always be strong with them. But I have refrained from even accepting any of these suggestions made by the Palestinian leadership regarding confederation or anything else because I believe that nothing of that kind can be discussed now. There is no room to discuss it until such time as we have a solution to the problem. And then people under conditions of freedom can decide what is best for them.

Q: Can Jerusalem remain under Israeli sovereignty, a united Jerusalem?

A: I believe we have a major problem there, and again this is one of the very important areas that will be discussed in the final status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Yet, as far as I am concerned, I have

always suggested that Jerusalem can be the symbol of two things and they are both very important. One it can be the symbol of the coming together once and for all of all the descendants of the children of Abraham; the Old City the Holy City, it is holy to all of us, and is important to all of us. I have never thought that or believed that God in His wisdom made it that important to the followers of the three Abrahamic religions... to try to exert an influence of one over the rights of the others. So as far as the Holy City is concerned I believe the special status, which is above the question of sovereignty of any, ought to be worked out in time, and at the same time East Jerusalem is occupied territory, it will also become, in terms of Jerusalem as such, the capital of both. It can be a symbol of the coming together once and for all of the Palestinians and the Israelis in a state of peace.

Q: May I ask you Your Majesty to be for a second an expert of the Arab World. What does President Assad of Syria want?

A: I believe that he wants peace. That is what he has told me repeatedly and I believe he has always stuck to his word in terms of anything that he has committed himself to. Obviously in return for peace the idea that was discussed, I believe they came pretty close on both sides to have reached an agreement was that peace in return for territory, peace in return for the territories occupied since June of 1967, and a real peace.

Q: They had a very good chance to do it during Mr. Rabin's term. We heard that Mr. Rabin was willing to give away the entire Golan Heights. Why did not he do it? Why did not he accept it?

A: I have no idea sir why it did not happen. I believe that a lot of ground was covered and that very little remained but obviously in this case in particular I feel very strongly that we should recognise that a lot of ground was covered and try to see beyond that what can be done and I hope that Syria and Lebanon would come into line, terms of solutions to their problems and will have the comprehensive peace that we seek.

Q: Your Majesty, have you ever tried to understand Jewish Israeli point of view, Jewish Israeli psychology. There are those who are saying we survived the holocaust. We have such a tiny little land. How can we trust the Arab World? How can we trust the world as a whole after so much promise we got now?

A: I agree with you very much indeed in what you suggest that this is a question which is a legitimate one. Yet at the same time I have always tried to place myself in the position of the Israelis and to think from their perspective. However, I came to maybe some different conclusions in some cases and areas.

For one thing sir, I believe that having suffered as the Jewish have suffered it is natural to expect them to be concerned not to cause suffering themselves and to try to resolve problems in a different attitude in different way. And this is something that has puzzled me over a period of time. But beyond that I can recognise the fact that they need to be reassured regarding their security and regarding their future. So if all these elements are there, people are willing to provide everything that would make them feel part of the area — and this is a fact — and a part of this future. Then we should not treat each other with distrust or disdain or fear or suspicion, nor should we permit a minority on both sides to destroy the chances for our children to

grow together and live in peace and secure the future that is worthy of them.

Q: You are following the public opinion in Israel and you hear the voices of people saying, well there are so many Arab leaders and still they are talking about the destruction, the need to destruct this little state of Israel. How can we trust them? How can we make peace with them? How can we give land-for-peace?

A: You know, people change and evolve over time. I think we can have no better example in terms of what he has accomplished than that of Yitzhak Rabin, for example, who fought for the survival of Israel, who brought its greatest victories, not alone but together with others. But he certainly was a very important element in that and won the respect of the world for it. Yet at the same time he realised that peace is the objective. We cannot live in a state of perpetual war. It is not right for our children on either side, for our people and for their future. So he sought it and he gave his life for it. We do not want our lives to be one of trial and error until we arrive at the logical conclusion at the end. We want to continue from where we started this time and give our people the chance and the opportunity and I feel that peoples in position of responsibility have a great deal that they can do. They can move things with vision and with courage in the right direction, or they can obstruct or play for time to get the experience they need. But this is at the expense of people, of their future, of their hopes. I do not particularly single out Israel on that side. I think that there are mistakes that were made by all of us over the long period of time. But we have to find the way that gives the people that we are responsible for an opportunity to live.

Q: Is it possible that our generation is premature for the peace, for the trust between the two peoples?

A: No sir, I do not think that it is premature that if we move in this world in the absence of peace and certainly in this region then we are talking of balances of power that might in the advantage of one side or the other. But this is something that can change with time. Why should we waste more of our time, more of our lives more of our energies which we need to build together a future for this entire region that is worthy of us?

Q: Your Majesty, you were the only Arab leader who welcomed Mr. Netanyahu after his victory in the elections. You said you believed that he will continue the peace process. Are you disappointed now?

A: I did welcome him here and I met with him several times, and I understand that he has many difficulties and many problems. But as far as I was concerned I did so because he was the choice of the people of Israel to be their prime minister, the person of their prime minister for the coming period.

On the other hand I remember that when the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty was ratified and was placed before the Israeli Knesset it had an overwhelming majority of support there. It was reminded of that by Yitzhak Rabin himself, that it wasn't a peace between a state and a party, it was a peace between two countries and two peoples. So we respected the choice of the Israelis but we certainly are concerned that progress is not as rapid as should have been for whatever reason and something must be done to ensure that we continue building on what we have laid in the way of foundations otherwise great harm can occur and great losses

to all of us.

Q: You referred to the Washington summit. And there were some reports that you said there that Mr. Netanyahu does not have Mr. Rabin's vision. Is that correct?

A: I would not care to comment on everything I said there. It was said in a private meeting. A lot of it has leaked out. But I certainly was concerned. I voiced these concerns very openly and very frankly and I think I have a right to say that because in my heart and mind I am worried for everybody, for the people of Israel — I have seen their warmth, I have enjoyed it — for the Palestinians, for the Jordanians, for Arabs, for the entire region. I feel I have a responsibility to be honest and frank not necessarily a diplomat which I never was. So things did not move in the right way so far. Yitzhak Rabin was a phenomena. I hope he will be emulated by others in the future. I hope that the Israeli prime minister will do everything he can to ensure that the work continues and is not lost. I believe in the sanctity of agreements and treaties. If we begin to try to alter and change here and there then we are looking for trouble and we will never have the confidence we need to continue to build on a solid foundation of confidence.

Q: The '67 war with Your Majesty's permission, was it your major mistake?

A: Sir you realised what dilemma I had at that time. You may not suggest it as a mistake. It was just inevitable. We could see what was likely to happen and what the results might be. We were lashing out at Jordan and Jordanian positions for actions — that occurred or planned elsewhere in this region. So from an Arab perspective it looked that we had to stick together if we are to face the danger. Certainly Israel viewed us as one. Beyond that our inability to look after the very long border and ceasefire line and every position on it in the face of the hostile attacks put us in confrontation with the others in the area who blamed us for not looking after our Palestinian brothers' interests — to the point when war looked as a real possibility. I felt the choice was the following: either we hand over our fate and our future to a united Arab command in accordance with the Arab League Charter, and our previous agreements or the war would happen, and the country would be destroyed and that Israel would, in any event move the way it did so. It wasn't a choice done or made by wanting war. The war in fact occurred a year and a half before Arab experts had decided that we would achieve parity with Israel.

Q: The Gulf war, another inevitable situation from your point of view?

A: The Gulf war was totally unexpected sir, in terms of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, particularly since Iraq took the position at the highest levels not to use Arab arms against another, but things deteriorated and that happened and caused a terrible shock to all of us. However, my attempts were to try to resolve the problem within the Arab context, to resolve it by achieving a withdrawal from Kuwait and negotiations to resolve them. Problems were still outstanding there, between the two sides... So I tried to make quite sure that in my mind and the minds of others that if we don't succeed, having been given the opportunity to try to resolve it within the Arab context, then we probably will be amongst the first to react differently and to react on the rest of the world against aggression and occupation of an Arab country.

## Israel under fire at OIC meeting

JAKARTA (Agencies) — Indonesian President Suharto warned Monday that the Middle East peace process was hanging in the balance because of Israel's failure to respect agreements as he opened an annual meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

"The Palestinian people are suffering because of the provocative actions of Israel and the refusal of Israel to implement its commitments," Mr. Suharto told the OIC's 24th annual ministerial meeting.

Referring to the deadlock

since the rightwing government came to power in Israel in June, Mr. Suharto said that the Middle East peace process "had been so promising but now hangs in the balance." Mr. Suharto termed the agreements reached by Palestine and Israel as "irrevocable international accords that cannot be changed and should be respected." OIC Secretary General Hamid Algabid blamed the peace stalemate on the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for its "non-compliance" with previous deals. "The Middle East peace

process has been marking time since the ascension to power of the new government in Israel," he said.

It was pointless to pretend to seek peace, security and cooperation in the Middle East while Israel was pursuing the establishment and expansion of settlements as well as "Judaisation," he said.

However, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa also criticised the OIC for dragging its feet in adopting "clear and effective positions" to uphold the rights of Muslims and Arabs in the Middle East.

Mr. Sharaa charged that Israel's non-compliance with its commitments "is but a vivid example" of the challenges facing Syria and the Arab World.

Although host officials have said that they intended to shift the meeting's discussions towards economic issues, the deadlocked peace process in the Middle East is expected to overshadow the five-day talks.

Mr. Suharto said that to continue maintain the relevance of the organisation, the OIC should "realistically sets the priorities of things that it want to achieve."

## Crown Prince, Princess Sarvath return

(Continued from page 1)

The Crown Prince added: "The region sits on top of 60 per cent of the world's oil reserves — being five per cent of the world's population and accounting for 30 per cent of the world's arms imports." Other foreseeable causes of conflict such as foreign debt, economic disparities, population movements, energy, water and ethnic conflicts were also mentioned by the Crown Prince, and it was stressed that "Jordan has long believed that institutions of multilateralism in the Middle East and Mediterranean region could enhance regional security and cooperation. Our conviction is that dialogue between regional parties will help avert future crisis."

In order to stabilise the strategic environment of the region, the Crown Prince pointed to the need for the proposed creation of an Organisation for Cooperation in the Middle East on the basis of inclusivity aimed at reducing tensions and creating norms of reconciliation.

He added that: "Our pivotal position at the cross-roads of the Mediterranean and the Gulf oil on one axis, and the Mashreq and Maghreb on the other, together mean that it is uniquely situated to contribute to a long-term transformation in the Middle East."

Responding to a question on terrorism, the Crown Prince stated Jordan's position of having a comprehensive approach towards this issue, believing that force alone cannot be the answer, and that aggressive energies should be harnessed for progress under pluralism and the development of communal identity.

As for relations with Iraq, Crown Prince Hassan said, that the legacy of sanctions cannot be represented in terms of optional relations. Maintaining good ties with the Gulf states, must not dictate bad trade relations with Iraq. For, we cannot remain moderate without being proactive.

The occasion was attended by the Duke of Kent, the Duke of Westminster, and Sir Michael Alexander, chairman of the institute's council, in addition to a number of Arab ambassadors and British dignitaries.

Earlier on, and in a live interview with the BBC Radio the Crown Prince said that Jordan would be most happy to support both the Palestinians and the Israelis in their negotiations, and that the support of the U.S. and Europe at this stage is most crucial for the success of the current talks. The Crown Prince expressed hope that the talks will produce positive results in the near future for the integrity of the moderates in the region is at stake.

on terrorism, the Crown Prince stated Jordan's position of having a comprehensive approach towards this issue, believing that force alone cannot be the answer, and that aggressive energies should be harnessed for progress under pluralism and the development of communal identity.

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## Kabariti refutes charges

(Continued from page 1)

He said that only an unjust government takes it upon itself to punish citizens on its own, adding that his government always referred cases of violations of the law to the judiciary for further action.

The Jordanian judiciary is an independent and honest authority and the government does not interfere in its work, he said.

Any country where the people are apprehensive of the law is a developed country as opposed to a country where the people are terrified of the authorities as represented by the government rather than the law that governs them is underdeveloped. Mr. Kabariti said.

The prime minister cited five points, which, he said, would substantiate his government's genuine concern over human rights.

These included: — Moves to establish a centre for the study of democracy, freedom and human rights. A draft law to set up the centre has already been presented to parliament.

— Draft laws in the pipeline to ensure the independence of the judiciary.

(Continued from page 1)

80s, was sent to the legislature several years ago, but, for some inexplicable reason, was not acted upon. The bill, if enacted, will permit authorities to question anyone found to be in possession of wealth that is incompatible with his or her declared income.

He said the committee followed a policy of transferring cases for prosecution only after ensuring that the cases had iron-clad evidence to secure a conviction.

— Ensuring protection for the judiciary against intimidation of any nature.

— Amendments to the Press and Publications Law to raise the ceiling of the freedom of the press with responsibility.

— Efforts to ensure a better standard of living for the people, through improving education and health schemes that cover the entire population.

Mr. Kabariti said his government respected opposing views and underlined the importance of having a healthy opposition to ensure respect for democracy. Without opposition the true meaning of democracy is lost, he said.

At the same time, the opposition should formulate its positions after methodical studies of the situation on a case-by-case basis and should not simply oppose the government for the sake of opposing, he added.

Labib Kamhawi, vice-president of the AOHR, also addressed the gathering and maintained the group's charges against the government.

He asserted that media organisations, including newspapers, were deliberately not extending coverage to AOHR activities.

According to Mr. Kamhawi,

given that the government owns part of the newspaper establishment in the country, such a policy reflected the government's stands on human rights.

He said the government was violating the Press and Publications Law by continuing to own equity in newspaper establishments. The law limits government equity to 30 per cent in any newspaper, and officials have said that all state equity in newspaper establishments would be sold before January 31, 1997.

The AOHR official demanded that the government should amend all laws, which, he said, give it leeway to violate human rights.

Mr. Kamhawi, however, conceded that Mr. Kabariti's attendance at Monday's meeting was in itself significant because it is a sign of changing times.

In reply, Mr. Kabariti called for objectivity on the part of human rights activists and in-depth studies before levelling accusations. These two elements, he said, were essential for any human rights activist or organisation to have credibility among the people.

In fact, he added, human rights activists and organisations who base their criticism on truth will actually be helping the government to shoulder its responsibilities in the right manner.

## Kabariti, Saleh meet

(Continued from page 1)

sanctions against Iraq imposed by the U.N. in 1990 and are not part of the oil-for-food deal.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said Mr. Saleh briefed Mr. Kabariti on the meetings he held on Sunday with the Jordanian business community at the Amman Chamber of Commerce and the Amman Chamber of Industry in Jordanian-Iraqi trade within and outside the oil-for-food deal.

In remarks to Jordan Television, Dr. Saleh said that his meeting with the prime minister was constructive and positive and focused on promoting bilateral ties.

Dr. Saleh, who on Sunday reaffirmed that Aqaba would be the second most important port after its own Umm Qasr in the Gulf for imports under the oil-for-food deal, said that he reviewed with Mr. Kabariti the meetings he held here, Sunday and role of Jordanian exporters in meeting Iraq's requirements.

Dr. Saleh said a meeting by the Jordanian-Iraqi joint committee was needed to discuss related issues.

He affirmed that Baghdad wanted to increase its imports from Jordan under the oil-for-food deal and called on Jordanian exporters to offer competitive prices and quality products.

In a press briefing on Monday, Information Minister Marwan Muasher said Jordan was prepared to meet Iraq's needs and described Jordanian-Iraqi trade and economic relations as strong.

The minister said Jordan drew a distinct line between political and economic relations.

In an radio interview on Monday, Mr. Kabariti said King Hussein and United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan hold identical views with regard to Iraq and that the views were in conformity to those of the Arab summit meeting held in Cairo in June.

"We wish to see Iraq resuming its natural role in the Arab Nation and we seek to lift the sufferings of the Iraqi people," Mr. Kabariti told Egypt's Sawt Al Arab radio.

"There are two dimensions to this question," he said. "The first is legal and is linked to Iraq's implementation of all U.N. resolutions and the other is political which requires from Iraq to reassure all Arab countries and the world community that it will contribute to the region's security and stability."

## 'Anti-corruption drive has no distinction'

(Continued from page 1)

At the same time, he said, the special committee was also humane.

The GID officer cited a case where it was found that up to 500 students enrolled in various universities had secured admission with the help of forged certificates, most of them from Kuwaiti institutions.

"We sent 10 cases to court but then we stopped when we realised that these youngsters faced up to three years in prison for simply using a forged document," said Mr. Bino. "We felt it would be unfair to deprive

people at such young age of three years of their life."

As a result, he added, the committee intensified its effort to unveil "the real culprits" — those who actually produced and supplied the forged certificates — and also requested that the 10 students who were already sent to court be freed on bail.

Bail is difficult to obtain in most cases involving the use of forged documents. "Simultaneously we also decided that no further action will be taken against the students who used

forged certificates if they are evicted from the concerned universities," he said.

Mr. Bino vowed that the special committee "will not allow any influence from any quarters of government to slow down or even dump any investigation..."

"This committee does not belong to the present government; nor would it belong to a future government," he declared. "We are a national institution dedicated to serving the interest of the country and its people."



## Ministers from 127 states gather at WTO meeting

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Wrangling over high-tech products, telecom services and labour standards dominated talks here Monday as ministers from 127 nations kicked off the first-ever meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The week-long trade meeting comes two years after the birth of the WTO which followed the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of global trade talks within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Charlene Barshefsky, the acting U.S. trade representative, said there had been "very good progress" on a proposed information technology agreement (ITA), designed to eliminate tariffs on high-tech products by 2000.

But her deputy, Jeffrey Lang, warned that the effort could collapse if there was no compromise before the meeting ends Friday.

"We strongly feel that if we don't get an ITA here, there is a risk, a serious risk, that we may not get it at any other time. That is why we are pushing so hard to do it here," he said.

Barshefsky hailed "impressive offers" by Asian countries but said the so-called quadrilateral grouping of Canada, the European Union (EU), Japan and the United

States had yet to resolve their differences.

Japan accused the EU of blocking the ITA proposal, covering an estimated \$600 billion a year in world trade, by insisting that it be linked to government procurement of such products.

"The main obstacle is the EU," a Japanese foreign ministry official said, denouncing the "delaying tactic" adopted by the Europeans. "It's not fair to try and make a linkage with something else. It should not be allowed."

France, meanwhile, said Washington had to pay a price if it wanted an agreement in Singapore.

A top French official who asked not to be named said an accord was "impossible" unless Washington budged on other issues, citing unresolved problems over the list of items to be included in the deal.

Malaysia's Minister for International Trade and Industry Rafidah Aziz, a vocal critic of the ITA proposal, voiced opposition to the plan.

"We are not for a zero approach, nor are we for a deadline for the year 2000," she said. "We didn't come here to negotiate ITA."

On the more immediate issue of the looming Feb. 15 deadline to conclude talks on basic telecommunications services, negotiators

expressed confidence that they had inched closer to a compromise.

Talks to liberalise the market for services such as voice, data transfer, telegram and fax services — worth about \$550 billion a year — collapsed in April with Washington demanding better offers from Asian nations.

During a special meeting of ministers from about 35 countries involved in the telecom talks, Australia, Canada, South Korea and Singapore indicated they would soon be bringing improved offers to Geneva, sources said.

"The bottom line was that we think this was a very good meeting, very positive in tone," said Barshefsky, who chaired the two-hour talks. She said the meeting was a "building block" in the process of reaching an agreement.

A senior official from Japan's post and telecommunications ministry who attended the meeting quoted Barshefsky as saying that some countries "needed time" to accept the agreement.

"We regarded the remark as a new U.S. compromise to accept flexibility in the deal for developing countries, but we need to confirm how far the United States will go in accepting flexibility," the Japanese official said.

## Israeli cabinet approves Netanyahu plan for deep new budget cuts

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's cabinet voted Monday to approve \$600 million in new austerity measures for 1997 over the objections of two key parties in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition.

The cabinet voted 14 to four in favor of a package of \$400 million in budget cuts and \$200 million in new taxes and other revenues aimed at bringing the budget deficit down by \$2.2 billion from 1996 levels.

The new measures come on top of \$1.5 billion in spending cuts already included in a draft 1997 budget narrowly approved by parliament in a first reading in October.

But since that vote, Mr. Netanyahu and Finance Minister Dan Meridor decided that flagging economic growth and a subsequent drop in revenue projections for next year made further cuts necessary to meet the government's target of bringing the overall budget deficit down to 2.8 per cent of GDP from 3.6 per cent this year.

Mr. Netanyahu divided the additional cuts into four categories, saying police and defence budgets needed to be trimmed by a further half per cent, social welfare spending by 1.3 per cent, economic programmes by three per cent and administrative min-

istries — notably the premier's office — by five per cent.

He ordered ministers to decide where to find the savings in their respective departments and report back later this week.

On the revenue side, Mr. Netanyahu refused calls to increase the country's already high income taxes but said new funds could be found by selling 3,000 empty apartments in Jewish settlements on the West Bank and raising sales taxes.

Those voting against the new package included Interior Minister Eli Shais and Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai of the ultra-orthodox Shas Party and Foreign Minister David Levy of the centrist Geshet group who opposed cuts to

education, medical and social programmes.

Shas and Geshet together hold 15 of the Netanyahu coalition's 66 seats in the 120-member Knesset and could thus join forces to block the budget when it is sent back to the legislature in coming days, officials said.

Israel Radio said Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai objected to any new cuts in the military budget, already targeted to lose \$250 million compared to 1996, but voted in favour of Mr. Netanyahu's proposals "as a question of national responsibility."

The Histadrut National Trade Union Federation announced that it would call a general strike in two weeks unless the government does not modify its proposals. The original \$60 billion budget

submitted by Mr. Meridor was only narrowly approved in its first reading after Mr. Netanyahu promised Mr. Levy and other unhappy members of his coalition that measures would be taken to ease the impact of the cuts on poorer Israelis.

Spokesmen for Mr. Levy's Geshet Party warned they would join the opposition to oppose the new budget plan when it goes to parliament.

Latest government figures indicate that the Israeli economy was growing at a rate of only 3.5 per cent annually, down from seven per cent in 1995, largely due to a drop in tourism revenues and foreign investment linked to problems in the peace process.

Parliament has until Dec. 31 to adopt next year's budget.

### REUTERS

### REUTERS

#### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.5556	0.6073	1.3258	113.17	1.3549	153.10	1.7449	5.2325
DE Mark	0.6428	1.0000	0.3901	0.8523	72.75	0.8705	983.84	1.1217	3.3777
GB Sterling	1.6465	2.6223	1.0000	2.1625	186.41	2.2308	2520.74	2.8753	8.8511
CHF Franc	0.7543	1.1723	0.4576	1.0000	95.38	1.0212	1154.00	137.57	3.9608
JP Yen	0.0088	1.3728	0.5358	1.1704	1.0000	1.1957	13.51	154.00	4.6391
CA Dollar	0.7381	1.1342	0.4435	0.9568	7.20	1.0000	1124.34	137.76	3.8425
IT Lira	0.0007	1.0155	0.3962	0.8865	1354.10	0.8842	1.0000	11.39	3.4298
NL Guilder	0.5731	0.8909	0.3477	0.7597	64.84	0.7760	876.75	1.0000	3.0698
FR Franc	0.1904	0.2960	0.1155	0.2525	21.52	0.2578	33.20	33.2000	1.0000

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	24.85	25.45
W. Texas	25.10	25.55
Bony	24.85	25.45
Dubai	22.25	22.85
UL Gas	212.00	215.00

Mid-East Currencies						
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4150	0.1619	0.3537	30.2124	30.2124
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.424	0.1656	0.3543	30.6561	30.6561
KW Dinar	3.3378	5.19481	2.02758	4.4287	378.215	378.215
OM Dinar	0.3784	0.5223	0.1923	0.4213	366.752	366.752
CY Pound	2.122	3.3023	1.2886	2.8137	240.308	240.308

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	358.7	359.2
Silver (oz's)	4.78	4.8
Platinum (oz's)	367.5	368.5
AL (3 Months)	1510	1511
CU (3 Months)	2148	2144
Zinc (3 Months)	1043	1044
Lead (3 Months)	667	669
NI (3 Months)	0	0

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)						
Period	-1	-3	-6	-9	-12	Year
Cncy	Months	Months	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.28	5.41	5.47	5.57	5.50	
GBP	6.00	6.21	6.43	6.62	6.75	
JPY	0.29	0.31	0.36	0.40	0.42	
DEM	3.18	3.12	3.12	3.18	3.17	
FRF	3.28	3.33	3.35	3.34	3.40	
CHF	2.16	2.16	1.93	1.89	2.00	
ITL	7.49	7.15	6.80	6.51	6.52	

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	109.5	Spot
Cocoa (c/lbs)	139.1	Spot
Sugar (c/ton)	304.8	Spot
Wheat (c/ton)	121	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	21.87	Spot
Tea (c/kg)	123	Spot
Barley (c/bsh)	2.19	Spot
Rice (c/ton)	470	Spot

JOD Cross Rates			
Currency	Buy	Sell	
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
GB Sterling	1.7838	1.7853	
DE Mark	0.4668	0.4591	
CHF Franc	0.5368	0.5395	
FR Franc	0.1352	0.1359	
JP Yen	0.8283	0.8284	
NL Guilder	0.4071	0.4091	
IT Lira	0.4628	0.4652	

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

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## Poverty on the rise in the Arab World

CAIRO (AFP) — The number of people in the Arab World living below the poverty line rose by 1.87 per cent per year between 1985 and 1990, according to a report released here.

"36.64 per cent of the population of the Arab World were living below an average poverty line of \$37 per person per month in 1990," said Ali Abdul Gadir Ali, director of research at the Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation in Kuwait.

According to a report he submitted to the Arab regional population conference which opened here Sunday, 33.4 per cent of the Arab population lived below a poverty threshold of \$35 per person per month in 1985.

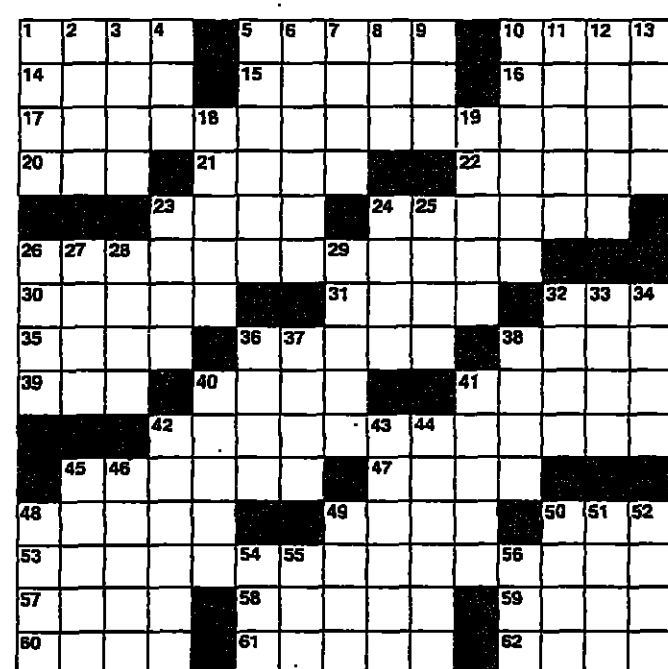
"Thus during the period

under consideration poverty has increased in the region at an annual rate of 1.87 per cent," Mr. Ali said in the report. The report showed poverty increased across the Arab World, with the highest rise in Egypt where the number of people living below the threshold rose by 3.8 per cent per year during the five-year period. In 1990 a total of 37.63 per cent of Egyptians lived in poverty, compared to 31.17 per cent five years earlier. Only Tunisia bucked the upward trend, with the amount of people living in poverty falling from 35.6 per cent of the population to 31.88 over the five years.

The rise in poverty came during a period when many Arab countries were dismantling social security programmes first put in place at independence, and gradually phased out from the late 1970s "under pressure to implement economic adjustment programmes," the study said.

### THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Romantic isle
  - Did carpentry
  - Instance
  - Who's Alfonso D'Abuzzo? (with 2D)
  - "What's in —?"
  - Bows
  - Who's Emmanuel Goldenberg?
  - Managed
  - Ancient country
  - River to the Rhone
  - Scottish highlander
  - Actor Brian
  - Who's Lucille La Sauer?
  - Voodoo fetish
  - Steepchase
  - Golf word
  - Trumpeter Al
  - Office worker
  - First or second
  - Modern: pref.
  - French city
  - Misrepresent
  - Who's William Pratt?
  - Combat places
  - Be unsteady
  - Cut short
  - Italian actress of old
  - "Cry — River"
  - Who's Marion Levy?
  - Italian wine center
  - Foodstuff from orchids
  - Can. prov.
  - Afterward
  - Pitchers
  - Think



by Grace C. Pinkston

8 Comic Philips	OMIT	ICES	AFTER
9 Society page figure, briefly	SOLE	CORGI	
10 False report	LATE	ROLE	READ
11 Fire crime	FIRE	EATER	REEDS
12 Stone of —	SLEDGE	SYNC	
13 Thrall of yore	GLAD	USABLE	
14 Arm span	SHAW'S	BOOM	SLAY
15 French river	COCO	ALOHA	TAKE
16 Little pest	AERO	DEMI	ASHES
17 Churchill's "Country"	DREDGE	SOFT	
18 Offer as collateral	CASS	LOCUST	
19 Elton —	OATHS	PINE	PITCH
20 Theater award	PIOUS	AGEE	VITIT
21 Space prefix	EDUCE	COAT	ECON
22 Small birds	NARKS	ERRS	TANK

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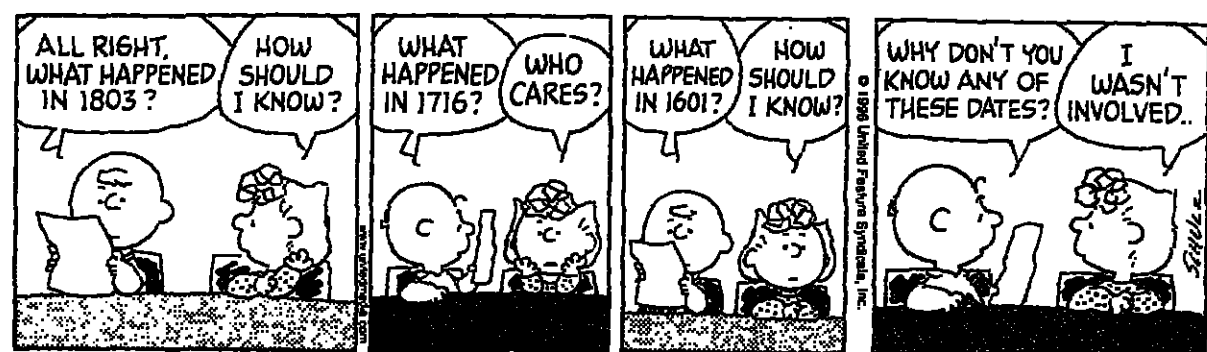
- DOWN
- Ring champ, 1934
  - See 14A
  - Sprinkler type
  - One — million
  - More unhappy
  - Zaire's neighbor
  - Weather word

- 34 Ridge of rocks
- 35 Williams of TV
- 36 Micronesia offerings
- 37 Ringer
- 38 Narrative tale
- 39 Lineage
- 40 Who's Israel Baline?

- 43 Former South African president
- 44 "Fables"
- 45 Disconcert
- 46 Paper or mail —
- 47 Pit
- 48 Printing term

- 50 Masculine
- 51 Art deco name
- 52 Genesis name
- 53 Mao — tung
- 54 Convert into leather
- 56 Father

### Peanuts



### Andy Capp



### Mutt'n'Jeff



### HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Benefits from a distance are not forthcoming today, so handle local matters which you feel are more important. Go through with tonight's plans and thereby you can make your career activities more successful.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Don't overspend today for pleasure or you could find yourself short of funds the situation develops for you to have some extra money. Go after whatever wholesome and delightful. Take care of your health in the days ahead.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Remain neutral today if a disagreement starts between a loved one and an outsider and it will soon blow over. Later this evening you can meet with a knowledgeable person and discuss your career activities with him or her.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Don't forget to answer today a message from a good friend which concerns your career activities. Enjoy a hobby later this evening and you can relieve the stress created from your business activities or you could explode.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Get into practical situations today which have to be righted. A wise person could give you advice later which would be well to follow and thereby make the projects which you are involved much more simplified.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Go after your personal desires today and get in touch with you close friends and show affection for them. Later this evening will be good to go out with your mate and have a romantic time together and have some fun.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) You are able to get into private matters today which are important to you and make your efforts more productive. Your closest loved one will be very helpful for your career activities, so make the best of a good situation.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Contact good friends today who can assist you in gaining personal wishes. Plan a campaign with your loved ones to seek out pleasures in the days ahead, which will make your lives more enjoyable to everyone.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Your ideas are poor and your judgement is not up to par today, so rely on advice given by bigwigs who have the patience to wait until another time. Later this evening will make your tasks much more successful.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) Have conversations today with those whose views are different from your own, thereby you can avoid any differences of opinion. Steer clear later this evening of a jealous person who is only out for his or herself, so be alert.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) You can come to a better understanding with your fellow associate if you are with that person today. Later this evening will be good for you to meet with those in authority and submit a plan of action which is successful.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Take some time today to comprehend the views of a fellow associate, and make sure you are clear on the circumstances. Give more support to your loved ones and get ahead with his or her assistance.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon



## Business

A review of news from the Arabic press

### Foreign investments in Kingdom total \$300 million

THE VOLUME of foreign investment in Jordan stands at around \$300 million, of which \$70 million are invested in the Amman Financial Market (AFM), according to Director General of the Investment Encouragement Corporation Taleb Rifai. He said percentage of investments to the gross national product (GNP) reached 30 per cent last year.

In an interview with the Cairo-based "Al Alam Al Yawm" magazine, Mr. Rifai denied the existence of any Israeli investments in Jordan, but conceded that Israeli investors are considered like any other foreign investors and are entitled to all incentives granted to others.

But he said there are joint Jordanian-Israeli ventures are being carried out as part of larger regional cooperation schemes and in implementation of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

Dr. Rifai said some Jordanian and Israeli private sector representatives took the initiative to launch several joint ventures but the Israeli government's policies stood in the way of implementing them.

Since its establishment in 1995, the Investment Encouragement Corporation approved the establishment of 237 projects with capitals totalling \$600 million. According to Mr. Rifai, all these projects benefited from incentives offered by the 1995 investment law which exempts these

projects from taxes for 10 years and exempts assets of these projects from tariffs and customs duties, provided that these assets are brought into the Kingdom within three years since the establishment of the project (Al Aswat).

### EU to grant Jordan 40 million ECUs

SECRETARY GENERAL of the Ministry of Planning Nabil Ammari said the European Union will grant Jordan 40 million European Currency Units (ECUs) before the end of this year. Mr. Ammari said this was the remainder of the 100 million ECUs in grants agreed upon between the two sides to support the balance of payments. Dwelling on the Jordanian-European partnership agreement, he said the agreement will be signed next January, adding that Jordan was not pushing for signing it before the end of 1996. Negotiations between the two sides, he said, were still ongoing "at the highest levels".

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### Kuwaiti stocks hit record trading levels

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The value of shares traded on the Kuwaiti Stock Market soared in the eleven months to November to reach almost \$18 billion, figures showed on Monday.

Shares worth \$3 billion (517.7 billion) changed hands between January and the end of last month, almost three times the value traded in the whole of 1995, according to figures compiled by Al Shail Economic Consultants.

In 1995, shares worth 1.9 billion dinars (\$6.4 billion) were traded, while the value of trading in 1994 was \$84 million dinars (\$2 billion).

Stock brokers said trading this year has been boosted by a successful government sell-off of stakes in local firms, a strong economic

performance mainly on the back of higher oil prices and good results from listed companies.

Along with a rise in activity, share prices have performed strongly pushing up the three main stock market indices in October and November to historic highs that were more than 35 per cent up on the year.

While the market capitalisation at the end of November rose to 6.5 billion dinars (\$21.7 billion), compared with 4.3 billion dinars (\$14.4 billion) at the end of last year.

Brokers said a recent price correction had brought the indices down from their peaks by a few percentage points, although opinions differ about whether prices will continue to drift lower.

### Arab bourses meeting concludes in Casablanca

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan took part in the 16th annual meeting of the Union of Arab Stock Exchanges which concluded in Casablanca, Morocco, last week.

Jordan was represented at the meeting by Director General of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) Wahib Shair, who said participants in the meeting discussed various issues, among which the most important was the report submitted by the secretary general of the union.

The report, he said, reviewed the union's activities during the year 1996 highlighted by the signing of the trilateral cooperation agreement between the Kuwait Stock Exchange, the Cairo Securities Com-

mission and Beirut Bourse which is to be implemented in the beginning of 1997.

The agreement was signed under the aegis of the Union of Arab Stock Exchanges and the Arab Securities Commissions, and due to the significance of this agreement, particularly in the coordination field, the union chose it to be its main theme for its next conference to be held during the first half of 1997, stressing that it represents a model for linking the Arab stock exchanges and strengthening the ties among them, Mr. Shair said.

Among other important events that took place during the meeting was the approval of Al Doha Securities Market as an operating member in the union, which

also endorsed the membership of "Solidair", the Lebanese company in charge of developing and re-constructing downtown Beirut, the "Mid Clear" — the Middle East & Lebanon Depository & Clearing Centre, and the Kuwait & Middle East Company for Investment.

The Union of Arab Stock Exchanges has eight members representing organised Arab stock exchanges with a market capitalisation totalling \$100 billion. Meanwhile, Mr. Shair left Casablanca for France and the United Kingdom to hold talks with representatives of British and French investment funds. The talks will focus on investment prospects in the Jordanian capital market.

### Libya opens its first private bank

TUNIS (R) — Libya has opened its first private bank, the Misratat Domestic Bank for Development and Investment, state-run Libyan Television reported over the weekend.

The television, monitored in Tunis, said the bank had nine million Libyan dinars (\$2.46 million) in capital. It gave no details on shareholders.

The bank, set up in Misratat, 150 kilometres east of Tripoli, was the first of a series of banks which Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi last year ordered to be set up to channel resources to help finance local development projects.

The Misratat Bank opened its first bank account in the name of Muammar Qadhafi and credited it with 1969 Libyan dinars (\$5.136), representing the year Mr. Qadhafi launched his revolution, Libyan Television said.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET												
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHEIKH SAUD												
TELEPHONE: 6071271 / 607179												
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 09/12/1996												
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH		COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADING	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
259.500	205.000	ARAB BANK	14.1	1.36	9	300	77250	259.00	257.00	2.00		
1.250	.880	MID-EAST INV.BK.	70.3	0.00	8	7050	7564	1.09	1.07	.02		
2.700	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	5.1	0.00	3	1200	2431	2.18	2.21	.03		
3.040	2.440	JOR.KINAT BANK	18.1	6.30	4	21950	54875	2.50	2.50	.00		
1.200	.880	JOR.GULF BANK	6.1	6.86	16	29441	30273	1.03	1.02	.01		
4.180	3.450	JOP.ISLAMIC BANK	18.2	0.00	1	200	752	3.80	3.76	.04		
3.800	3.000	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	20.3	0.00	3	450	1724	3.73	3.75	.02		
1.590	1.000	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	26	24875	31232	1.30	1.33	.03		
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 195.99 %CHG: -0.58 71 85400 208062												
1.800	1.390	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	11.2	4.90	1	250	383	1.46	1.53	.07		
2.910	1.830	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	5.6	10.15	8	1100	2155	1.95	1.97	.02		
5.090	3.700	ALINER AL-ANABI	12.3	4.13	2	1500	7260	5.09	4.84	.25		
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 117.68 %CHG: -0.22 11 2850 9798												
1.900	1.450	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	11.6	7.19	14	6013	10337	1.72	1.67	.05		
6.050	4.200	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	19.0	2.68	14	1840	8826	4.60	4.78	.18		
2.800	2.090	SLEEPING LINES	10.8	7.54	38	24000	5100	2.50	2.55	.05		
1.960	1.050	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	26	19630	25499	1.32	1.30	.02		
1.050	.870	REAL ESTATE INV.	20.0	4.14	1	200	180	.89	.99	.10		
1.260	.880	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	32.3	0.00	2	1000	630	1.63	.63	.00		
2.300	1.550	MID. EAST HOTELS	69.4	0.00	2	500	805	1.63	1.61	.02		
3.720	3.130	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	14.1	5.60	3	360300	1315074	3.60	3.57	.03		
1.270	.860	JORDAN EDUCATION	6	0.00	12	8650	7255	1.10	1.08	.02		
2.430	1.690	UNITED CO.	10.5	5.60	17	65200	131721	1.97	2.00	.03		
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 114.40 %CHG: +0.47 193 46338 1505705												
3.770	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.2	2.82	15	8041	28497	3.59	3.54	.05		
3.550	2.710	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	35.5	0.00	8	39300	129650	3.30	3.30	.00		
10.550	6.750	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.7	8.33	38	24080	23027	9.15	9.60	.45		
1.990	1.150	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	57.3	0.00	7	2100	2738	1.33	1.33	.00		
3.750	1.650	INDUSTRIAL CORN. AGR.	33.2	0.00	12	3900	9578	2.35	2.47	.12		
8.150	6.420	JOR. WOODSTOCK MILLS	9.0	3.55	1	500	3525	7.05	7.05	.00		
4.870	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	20.6	5.33	76	29701	112051	3.82	3.75	.07		
2.400	1.570	JOR. PIPES MANUF.	9.1	7.27	1	250	413	1.65	1.65	.00		
2.250	1.380	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	7	2100	3077	1.47	1.47	.00		
8.000	4.250	DAB ALABAMA DV. INV.	13.9	3.94	17	6400	33026	5.12	5.07	.05		
.960	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	116	227950	153504	1.67	.66	.01		
1.500	1.060	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	8.1	8.70	3	600	717	1.21	1.19	.02		
1.050	.840	NATIONAL INDS.	9.6	9.23	45	56650	36731	.65	.65	.00		
1.840	.930	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	80	20850	24763	1.19	1.15	.04		
1.150	.780	JOR. ROCKWELL INDS.	9	0.00	6	2450	2181	.89	.88	.01		
3.580	2.280	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	75.6	0.00	1	300	858	2.89	2.86	.03		
1.100	.680	ALAN CO.	400	3249	3	300	3249	3.61	3.61	.00		
4.250	2.130	NATL. CABLE WIRE-MFAC	15.5	0.00	6	1500	3685	2.54	2.55	.01		
1.380	.670	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	14	4150	3483	.80	.84	.04		
1.910	1.080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	30.3	0.00	130	68100	111704	1.62	1.62	.00		
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 117.07 %CHG: -0.29 870 731105 1184938												
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 154.49 %CHG: -0.40 1145 1282693 2908502												
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 09/12/1996												
.790	.440	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	22.1	0.00	7	6000	3300	.56	.55	.01		
.800	.510	JOR. TRADE FAC.	15.5	0.00	9	5600	3248	.58	.58	.00		
.950	.440	NATL. COMMER. CENTERS	9	0.00	17	35200	19308	.55	.54	.01		
.930	.700	UNION INV. 502	71.7	0.00	42	157300	29125	.75	.75	.00		
1.110	.370	ARAB FID. INVEST.	9	0.00	87	147850	75230	.49	.50	.01		
.640	.340	JOR. INDS. MATCH-JENCO	9	0.00	1	1000	390	.40	.39	.01		
.860	.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	10	7600	5194	.67	.69	.02		
1.760	1.300	NATL. CEMENT	10	0.00	10	4000	5915	1.48	1.46	.02		
.700	.450	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	18	36032	18607	.51	.52	.01		
1.000	.520	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	24	27150	17361	.61	.64	.03		
1.100	.400	NATL. MULT. ENG. MANUFACT.	10	0.00	45	124250	70823	.54	.57	.03		
.810	.430	NATYAK DYES & WOODS	9	0.00	17	18400	10488	.54	.57	.03		
1.080	.720	JORDAN STEEL	9	0.00	21	28900	23260	.79	.80	.01		
1.330	1.020	UNION TOBACCO TX	9	0.00	2	250	291	1.08	1.08	.00		
.840	.570	RAZI PHARM. 65	9	0.00	14	10800	3148	.64	.64	.00		
.830	.390	INDS. ENG.	28.3	0.00	42	82600	38645	.46	.46	.00		
1.430	.760	INDS. CERAMIC	12	0.00	12	68100	57895	.48	.48	.00		
.630	.360	1-TEXTILE MANUF.	9	0.00	1	250	105	.40	.40	.00		
.950	.800	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	63.9	0.00	3	628	571	.87	.91	.04		
1	.500	.530	MID-EAST COMPLEX	8.2	0.00	16	9800	6860	.70	.70	.00	
GRAND TOTAL 397 771810 399942												
* New 12 months low												
N Limited during the past 12 months												
P P/E ratio is 100 or more												
- Negative P/E												
E Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year												



## 1998 Asian Games to be the biggest ever

BANGKOK (AFP) — The 1998 Asian Games in Bangkok will be the biggest ever following a decision Monday to revive the quirky sport of kabaddi and admit squash for the first time.

The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) spent an intense day of wrangling over the sports to be included but eventually agreed on 36. There were 33 sports at the 1994 games in Hiroshima.

Thirty-four sports were agreed Sunday with kabaddi and squash fighting for the final place. But after the OCA general assembly failed to reach a decision the president, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Sabah of Kuwait, included both.

India, who won the gold medal at the last two Asian Games, fought strongly for kabaddi — a form of tag — while Pakistan, the home of world champion Jansher Khan, put up a strong case for squash.

The Bangkok organising committee's pleas that they did not have the facilities to stage squash was diluted by an offer from the Asian Squash Federation to provide four glass courts.

"The president made the final decision and the organisers will be helped with the facilities for squash," said one OCA vice president.

Chairman of the OCA sports committee, China's Wei Jizhong, said his telephone had gone non-stop from 6:00 a.m. this morning with people lobbying

## Hong Kong to fly new Olympic flag from July '97

BANGKOK (R) — The British colony of Hong Kong has agreed to change its Olympic flag, anthem and emblem at international sporting events from July 1, 1997, when it reverts to China, sports officials said on Monday.

The agreement was reached at a meeting of the 29th Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) executive board here late Sunday, they told Reuters.

Hong Kong's representative, A. De Sales, who also heads the OCA's regulations and rules committee, agreed to the changes after consultation with Chinese delegates, the officials said.

"The IOC last year adopted a resolution to maintain Hong Kong in the IOC, but during the OCA meeting on Sunday, some members brought up the question of its emblem," Santiphab Thechavanich, Thailand's IOC committee told Reuters.

The OCA also expressed concern at possible side-effects of pollution on athletes from factories operating around Bangkok during the Asian Games.

It said factories around the capital and competition venues should be shut down at least 15 days before the commencement of the games and remain closed for its duration to cut pollution.

for the sports.

"I have always wanted both of them — that was the decision of the sports committee but the executive went against that yesterday. Now the president has made a decision," he said.

The OCA general assembly heard that Thailand had agreed a budget of more than \$300 million for building and upgrading sports facilities, the athletes village and press centre.

"After seeing the progress report we feel a lot happier about the staging of the Asian Games here," said the sheikh. "We had been worried about Bangkok's

ability to stage the games but everything is moving well now."

He announced that three sponsors had signed up to back the 1998 Asian Games and more marketing deals were being completed.

Forty-three countries will compete in the Asian Games from December 6-20, 1998 in 36 sports, an increase of three from the 1994 Hiroshima event.

A drug laboratory has been set up to handle the hundred of tests to be carried out on athletes and it is awaiting official approval from the International Olympic Committee.

## Capello, and Sacchi have different views on victory

LONDON (R) — Fabio Capello and Arrigo Sacchi, past and present coaches respectively of AC Milan, were winners with a contrasting view of success at the weekend.

Capello, who moved to real Madrid from Milan at the end of last season, saw his Spanish League leaders beat Barcelona 2-0 in the latest edition of one of European soccer's greatest rivalries.

"Tactically we played a perfect match," said Capello, whose side are two points clear of second-placed Deportivo Coruna.

Sacchi, who has quit as Italy coach to step back into the hot seat at ailing AC Milan, saw the charges beat Udinese 2-1 but reflected: "The important thing for Milan today was to regain confidence in themselves, but if this was the Real Milan, then we face a tough year."

Spain Real Madrid's Balkan strike force of Predrag Mijatovic and Davor Suker scored either side of half-time on Saturday to give their side victory over Barcelona at the Bernabeu Stadium.

Real had the best of the clash despite 20 minutes of heavy Barcelona pressure in which they were twice saved by the woodwork and once by an unexpected miss by Brazilian striker Ronaldo.

The leaders' first came after 24 minutes when Roberto Carlos looped in a free-kick and Croatian international Suker appeared on the far side to squeeze home the ball after an apparent mix-up in the Barcelona defence.

Real went further ahead three minutes after the break when Clarence Seedorf put through Predrag Mijatovic, and the Montenegro made no mis-



Italian Roma's striker Francesco Totti (L) is tackled by Lazio Australian midfielder Paul Michael Okon during their first league soccer match December 9. The match ended 0-0 (Reuters photo)

take.

### Italy

As Sacchi walked into the San Siro for his first taste of Serie A soccer in five years, he was met with the eerie sound of silence. Fans shocked by Milan's humiliation at the hands of Norway's Rosenborg in the

ference alone.

### Germany

Juergen Klinsmann scored his 100th Bundesliga goal Saturday to propel Bayern Munich to a 1-0 win over Borussia Moenchengladbach.

The German international striker, who has endured

## EUROPEAN SOCCER ROUNDUP

European Cup on Wednesday had banners with such messages as "no scapegoats. You're all guilty."

In the first half the home side looked as poor as Wednesday's, but after the break Sacchi sent on Dejan Savicevic and within nine minutes the Montenegro had headed home George Weah's cross.

Although Udinese equalised, Milan edged in front again in the 67th minute with a well-taken goal from Stefano Eranio — again made by Weah.

Milan are seventh, while Juventus won 1-0 at Sampdoria and now trail Italian league leaders Vicenza, held 1-1 by Internazionale, on goal dif-

fered alone. Monaco scored in the 51st minute, beating goalkeeper Uwe Kamps from 10 metres after a pass from Mario Basler.

Bayern now enter the winter break at the top of the table for the 10th time since they entered the Bundesliga in 1965, ending the autumn season with 36 points, two more than champions Borussia Dortmund.

### France

Monaco failed to take full advantage of the shock 2-1 defeat of arch rivals Paris St Germain by Nancy 24 hours earlier when they were held to a goalless draw at home by Guingamp on Saturday. A win would have

allowed in-form Monaco to seize a two-point lead over PSG. Instead, Monaco, who had won their last four league matches, were unable to break down a solid Guingamp defence and had to be content with taking over at the top of the table on goal difference.

Northern Ireland forward Phil Gray struck a last-minute winner as relegation candidates Nancy came from behind to inflict the shock home defeat on leaders PSG on Friday.

### England

Frenchman Patrick Vieira rescued Premier League leaders Arsenal by blasting his first goal for the club in injury time to salvage a 2-2 draw against Derby Saturday.

Arsenal had been rocked by strikes from forwards Dean Sturridge and Darryl Powell in the 62nd and 71st minutes which thrust Derby 2-1 ahead at Highbury.

But the London club, who were given the lead by a diving header from captain Tony Adams on the stroke of half-time, launched a desperate late offensive in which mid-

fielder Vieira crashed an unstoppable left-foot drive through a crowded penalty area to save the day for Arsenal.

The draw took Arsenal to 34 points, four points clear at the top on a day when Liverpool suffered a 1-0 defeat against Sheffield Wednesday at Anfield and Wimbledon leap-frogged over them into second place by winning 3-1 at Sunderland.

### Netherlands

European Cup survivors Ajax were held 1-1 by 10-man AZ Alkmaar on Sunday, having seemed set for maximum points after moving ahead in the 11th minute when Arno Splinter's shot deflected into goal and Alkmaar's Danny Hesp was sent off for bringing down Nordin Wooter after 30 minutes.

But lowly AZ fought hard and were rewarded in the 55th minute when Krystof Bociek jumped high to head home an equaliser.

Ajax were left in sixth place, 15 points behind leaders PSV Eindhoven who thrashed Volendam 6-0 on Saturday.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Leonardo out for rest of 1996

PARIS (R) — Brazil's Leonardo pulled a muscle in his left thigh in training with Paris St Germain and will be out of action for the rest of the year, team doctors said on Monday. The 27-year-old midfielder will miss PSG's last two league matches against Nantes and Montpellier as well as Brazil's friendly against Bosnia later this month. The doctors said he would undergo further tests and could be back in action for a crucial league clash against Monaco on January 26.

### Krajicek undergoes knee surgery

ROTTERDAM (R) — Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek will be out of the game for up to 10 weeks after undergoing knee surgery, Dutch ANP news agency said. Krajicek, who has suffered from knee trouble for some time, had a piece of cartilage removed from his right knee during an operation at a Rotterdam hospital. The Dutchman will miss the Australian Open in Melbourne in January.

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH  
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### SURPRISE, SURPRISE!

Neither vulnerable. East deals.

**NORTH**  
♠ J 8 6 4  
♥ A 9 5 4 2  
♦ 10 8  
♣ A K 9 7 6

**EAST**  
♠ A 3 2  
♥ Q 7  
♦ Q J 8 7 3  
♣ A Q 5 4 3

**SOUTH**  
♠ K 10 9 8 7 6  
♥ A K Q 5 2  
♦ 10  
♣ A 2

The bidding:  
EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH  
Pass 1♠ 2♠ Pass  
Pass 4♣ 5♣ Pass  
Pass Pass Dbl Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠

Some facecards have an obvious objective. Others are designed solely to confuse the issue, without knowing exactly how they will affect the play.

On this deal from a team match, both North-South pairs were pushed to five hearts on similar sequences. East tried to steal the hand with a preempt of four clubs, but South was too strong distributionally to be shut out of the auction.

At both tables West led the king

of clubs and continued the suit for declarer to ruff. A low spade was led toward the jack.

At one table West put up the queen of spades to win the trick, then shifted to the king of diamonds, taken by the ace. Declarer came to hand with the queen of clubs, cashed the king and led the king of spades, running it when West followed with the four. When that won, declarer drew the remaining trump then continued with ruffing finesses in spades to pick up the ace. Declarer still had a trump left with which to come to hand to cash the good spades.

At the other table West realized that playing the queen of spades on the first lead of the suit would expose the ace to a ruffing finesse, as the defender elected to take over by winning with the ace. The king of diamonds was taken by the ace, declarer entered the closed hand with a high trump, cashed the king of spades and led the ten. When West followed low, declarer ruffed, expecting to fetch East's queen.

Unruffled by East's surprising discard of a club, declarer returned to hand with the king of hearts as East again showed out, then ruffed out the queen of spades. Now dummy had nothing left but diamonds, and when declarer tried to cross to hand to draw the last trump by ruffing a diamond, West overruffed for down one.

## Orioles sign Key to 2-year contract

BALTIMORE (R) — Free agent left-hander Jimmy Key left the world champion New York Yankees on Sunday to sign a two-year, \$7.8 million contract with their American League East rivals, the Baltimore Orioles.

The 35-year-old key rebounded from shoulder surgery that kept him sidelined for most of the 1995 season and made 30 starts for the Yankees in 1996, going 12-11 with a 4.68 era.

He was 2-1 with a 3.33 era in four starts during the Yankees' post-season championship campaign.

"We are very pleased and excited to add Jimmy to our starting rotation," Orioles general manager Pat Gillick said.

"He is a proven winner and among the best left-handed pitchers in baseball today. He provides our staff with another winning pitcher with championship attitude and experience."

Key began his career with the Toronto Blue Jays before signing with the Yankees, where he played the last four seasons. He won world series championships with both clubs.

Key, who is 164-104 with a 3.49 era during a 12-year career, joins a rotation that features three right-handers in ace Mike Mussina, Scott Erickson and Rocky Coppins.

## Wales wait on Hughes for Turkey World Cup qualifier

CARDIFF (AFP) — Wales will know on Tuesday whether Mark Hughes has a chance of playing in Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Turkey in Cardiff.

The gashed shin which Hughes suffered in Chelsea's 2-0 defeat at Leeds a week ago has not healed.

Hughes had hoped to be able to play in Chelsea's 2-2 draw at home to Everton on Saturday using protective padding for the injury.

But he missed that game and is now doubtful for Wales' vital clash with the Turks.

"Mark will stay at Chelsea and a decision will be made on his fitness tomorrow. The injury has not healed properly," Welsh manager Bobby Gould said.

Hughes missed Wales' 7-1 defeat against Holland in Eindhoven last month through suspension and it would be a major blow for Gould if he was missing again instead of resuming his strike pairing with Nottingham Forest's Dean Saunders.

Wales skipper Barry Horne, who missed the hammering in Holland because of a hamstring strain, is carrying an ankle injury but will join up with the rest of the squad in Newport today.

Manchester United winger Ryan Giggs didn't recover from a calf strain in time to face the Dutch in Eindhoven and missed the home defeat against Guus Hiddink's side in October through suspension.

But Giggs came through United's 2-2 draw at West Ham yesterday unscathed and Gould will be keeping his fingers crossed that he can go on to win his 18th cap against the Turks.

Gould welcomes back Bolton striker Nathan Blake, who missed the Eindhoven defeat through an ankle injury. Blake escaped injury in Bolton's 2-2 at West Bromwich Albion.

Gould has already lost Birmingham duo Andy Legg (torn hamstring) and Jason Bowen (ankle ligaments) and has put Swindon full-back Paul Bodin and QPR defender Karl Raddy on stand-by.

Bodin, 32, was an unfortunate villain of the hour back in November 1993 when Wales' hopes of qualifying for the 1994 World Cup ended in heartache.

Bodin hit the crossbar with a penalty during the final qualifying game against Romania in Cardiff. The Romanians went on to win the game 2-1 and book their place for USA 94 instead of Wales.

Gould is hoping keeper Mark Crossley comes through Nottingham Forest's clash with Newcastle at the City ground tonight without any injury problems.

## Tomba to return in Italy next week

ROME (R) — Alberto Tomba will race for the first time this season at an Alpine skiing world cup slalom in Italy next week, the Italian was quoted as saying Monday.

"I will return on the 17th, at Madonna Di Campiglio," the daily Gazzetta Dello Sport newspaper quoted the Olympic and world champion as telling a meeting in Bologna.

Tomba, who has not competed since injuring his wrist and knee in a heavy fall in pre-season glacier training in October, said that he would not compete in a giant slalom scheduled for December 22 in nearby Alta Badia.

"I won't do the giant because I have not trained for that discipline. I'll leave it until January," Tomba said. The Madonna Di Campiglio race, a short slalom, comes just two days before the Italian's 30th birthday and has in previous years seen a party atmosphere with Tomba regularly presented with a cake by his adoring crowd of fans.

The Alta Badia giant is regarded as one of the most demanding on the circuit.

Tomba hit the headlines in Alta Badia last season when he threw a magnum of champagne and a heavy glass trophy at a photographer who had sold nude photographs of him. The photographer suffered cuts to his hand.

"The Italian said his wrist was still hurting slightly and slowed him down on leaving the starting hut. 'But I had feared worse,' he said. 'The knee is fine already.'"

Tomba, who won two gold medals at the world championships in Spain earlier this year to go with his three Olympic golds, said last month that he might have to wait until next year before returning to the pistes because of his fall.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL: 634144

### PHILADELPHIA

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30  
Macaulay Culkin... in

GETTING EVEN WITH DAD  
PHILADELPHIA 2  
TWISTER

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 699238

### PLAZA

SEAN CONNERY...in

THE ROCK  
(IN DOLBY STEREO)

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 677420

### CONCORD

CONCORD "1"  
INDEPENDENCE DAY  
(IN DOLBY STEREO)

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45  
CONCORD "2"

Robert Redford & Michelle Pfeiffer... in  
UP CLOSE & PERSONAL  
Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 618274 - 618275

### Ammon Theatre & Cinema

Today presents Zawad Weld Awad  
theatre group in the play entitled

Five-Star Government  
Starring comedians:  
Mahmoud Saimah  
& Hussein Tubeishat

play starts 8:30 p.m.

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155

### PRESENTS

THE SATIRICAL COMEDY

Arab Human Rights  
at 8:30 p.m.

Theatre is closed Friday, Saturday & Sunday  
For reservation please call:  
625155 - 640155



## African soccer faces new era

CAIRO (R) — African soccer leaders begin a series of meetings Tuesday which are likely to change the face of the game on the continent and allow clubs to make money from its competitions for the first time.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) holds its committee meetings throughout the week in the Egyptian capital and will review bids from marketing agents, potential sponsors and TV stations for the rights to its new African Champions' League, which is to be launched next year.

"We have bids from companies in France and Switzerland and others to consider and decide on," said CAF press officer Viken Djizmedjian Sunday.

"The main aim of this new Champions' League is to benefit the participating teams and national associations because their main complaint is that in the past they have gained little and do not have the money to always play in the African Cup," he said.

"We hope to make the best of it and are going to take the best offer for television coverage and publicity."

The African Champions' League is being modelled on its successful European Cup counterpart, which has generated considerable revenue for participating teams.

"We hope that in the near future it will be as big a success as the European Champions' League has been. We all know that the level of performance of African teams has improved a lot and the time is now ripe for

this type of competition," said Djizmedjian.

The format of the African Champions' League will see the tournament retain its traditional two-legged knockout format until the quarter-final stage, when the eight remaining teams will be divided into two groups of four.

The groups will be played on a home-and-away league basis and the winners will meet in a two-leg final in December next year.

CAF are seeking a minimum of \$3 million for the rights to the 24 matches in the Champions' League, with 70 per cent of the revenue going to clubs and their national associations.

The meetings will also consider the latest report on Burkina Faso's preparation for the hosting of the next African Nations' Cup finals, tentatively scheduled for February, 1998.

A CAF inspection team is to visit the arid west African country in the new year to check on the building of new stadia and hotels for the 16-team competition.

The CAF meetings will also finalise the draw for next year's three African club competitions, which is due to be announced on Wednesday.

Other business includes details of the African team to play against a European team in Lisbon on January 29 and preparations for a possible African mini-tournament to be played in Ethiopia in August to celebrate CAF's 40th birthday.

## Becker deserves big payday after tough year

MUNICH (R) — Boris Becker's bumper payday of \$1.875 million at the Grand Slam Cup was a fitting reward for a true professional at the end of one of the toughest years of his life.

After his 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 triumph over Goran Ivanisevic in Sunday's final, Becker spoke of black moments in an injury-marred year when he had worried if he would ever play properly again.

The Australian Open champion suffered an illness earlier in the year and then a leg muscle tear forced him out of the French Open.

He recovered to win at Queen's Club just before Wimbledon but then sustained a serious wrist injury during the event he considered the most important which left him in plaster.

But the 29-year-old German has bounced back to produce some of the best tennis of his life.

While some players were criticised for taking the money and running at the richest tournament in the game in Munich, Becker has produced performances which have delighted his home fans.

"I was severely injured for three months. I couldn't hold a racket," Becker said. "You start thinking 'will I ever be able to play tennis again well? Or was that it?' I have never felt so much pressure in my career."

"Nevertheless, it is a very good feeling to start the Christmas holidays knowing that you are at your peak. I'm looking forward (to the new year) and hope I can get back to this level as soon as possible."

The Cup, which brings together the best performers from the four Grand Slams — Wimbledon and the U.S., French and Aus-

tralian Opens — offers the biggest prize money in the game. Even first-round losers take home \$100,000.

Andre Agassi left the tournament with the boos of a disappointed crowd ringing in his ears after a below-par first-round defeat. Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek was also a major disappointment.

Organisers admitted on Sunday that some players had taken the money and run.

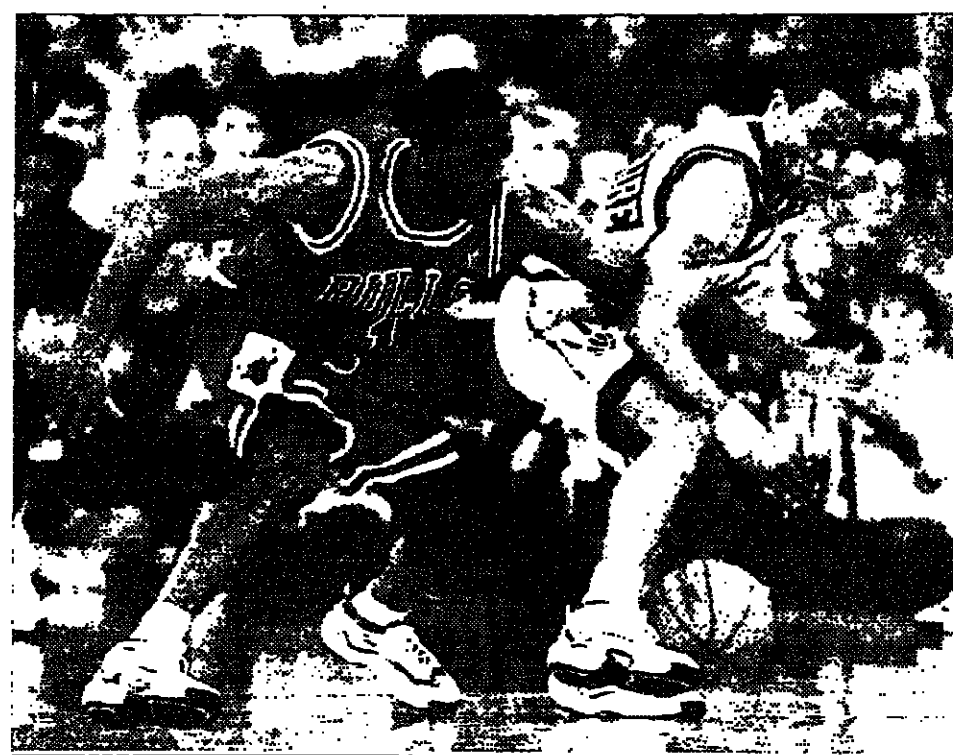
"I think there have been some problems with players this year here," International Tennis Federation (ITF) president Brian Tobin said. "I think one has to look at some of the players and ask whether they're acting in a professional way towards their sport..."

Tennis fans in Germany realise that the days of watching Becker dominating the game may be numbered. He will be 30 next year and it is known that he does not want the strains of the circuit to disrupt his family life much longer.

But in this form, the German must be a hot favourite to defend his title at next month's Australian Open. If he stays at this level, he is capable of winning at Wimbledon for a fourth time and challenging Pete Sampras for the number one spot.

"He had a good chance to become the number one this year if he didn't have injury," Ivanisevic said. "He's going to be one of the toughest opponents to beat. I think he's going to be dangerous to be number one next year."

Becker has beaten Sampras twice indoors in the last few months and barely lost a five-set thriller to the American in the final of last month's ATP World Championship. The German, currently ranked sixth, has respect for Sampras but knows he can challenge him.



Toronto Raptors' guard Damon Stoudamire (R) gets the ball stripped by Chicago Bulls' guard Randy Brown during first quarter NBA action in Toronto. Toronto defeated Chicago 97-89 (Reuters photo)

## Raptors stun Bulls

TORONTO (R) — Damon Stoudamire scored a career-high 31 points and the Toronto Raptors held Michael Jordan scoreless in the second half to post a stunning 97-89 victory over the Chicago Bulls.

Stoudamire was 13-for-24 from the field, handed out 13 assists and grabbed six rebounds. Popeye Jones scored 12 points and tied his own club record with 18 rebounds for the Raptors, who outscored Chicago 34-19 in the fourth quarter.

"It was a great game to sit back and watch," said Toronto coach Darrell Walker. "My guys came to play tonight. When you get 12 rebounds out of your backcourt, you're really pounding people."

Toronto out-rebounded the defending NBA champions 52-38.

Toni Kukoc's layup with 2:25 left in the fourth quarter gave the Bulls an 84-83 edge, but Stoudamire nailed a 17-foot jumper 21 seconds later to put the Rap-

tors ahead for good.

Scottie Pippen scored 28 points to lead Chicago, but Jordan was limited to a season-low 13 as the Bulls lost for the second time in as many nights, suffering consecutive defeats for the first time since last February.

Chicago held a 70-61 advantage in the third quarter before Doug Christie started an 11-0 burst for Toronto.

In Cleveland, Terrell Brandon had 30 points and nine assists and Bobby Sura added 14 points to lead the Cavaliers to a 90-69 rout of the Los Angeles Clippers.

In Phoenix, Wesley Person scored 21 points and Kevin Johnson added 15 as the Suns led from start to finish in a 106-93 victory over the Indiana Pacers.

Johnson scored eight of his points in the first quarter when the Suns outscored Indiana 27-14.

In Oakland, Joe Smith scored 24 points and Latrell Sprewell added 23, eight assists and seven rebounds to lead the Golden State

Warriors to a 114-88 victory over the floundering San Antonio Spurs.

Chris Mullin chipped in 17 points for Golden State, which has defeated San Antonio twice this season.

In Los Angeles, Nick Van Exel scored 17 of his 23 points in the first quarter and Shaquille O'Neal added 22 points as the Lakers clobbered the Minnesota Timberwolves 110-86.

Van Exel was 7-for-10 from the field, including 4-of-5 from three-point range, as the Lakers posted their most lopsided victory of the season.

In Milwaukee, Vin Baker scored 24 points and grabbed 10 rebounds and Andrew Lang had 14 and 14 to lead the Bucks to a 100-87 victory over the Boston Celtics.

In Sacramento, Mitch Richmond scored 22 points and Tyus Edney added 18 points and seven assists to lead the Kings to a 91-84 victory over the injury-ravaged Orlando Magic.

## Asian Cup

### Japan sail into quarters

AL AIN (AFP) — Japan booked their quarter final berth in the Asian Cup with a comfortable 4-0 win over Uzbekistan in their Group C match here Monday.

The victory gave Japan a maximum six points from their two matches. Uzbekistan, playing in their first ever Asian Cup, have three points thanks to their surprise win over China last Friday but they must win their final group match against Syria Thursday to keep their quarter-final hopes alive.

Japan, the defending champions, quickly took control of the match, stifling Uzbekistan in the midfield with man-to-man marking.

It took them only seven minutes to go in front. Uzbekistan defender Genady Denisov headed a loose ball clear only to send it straight to Hiroshi Nanami. The 24-year-old midfielder fired in an unstoppable shot from 35 yards giving goalkeeper Dmitri Bashkevich no chance.

As Uzbekistan struggled to get the ball out of defence to their strike force of Igor Shkvyrin and

Dilmurod Nazarov, the Japanese attack was threatening to have a goal feast. Only poor finishing saved Uzbekistan, who had to wait until the 17th minute before putting any pressure on Kenichi Shimokawa in the Japanese goal.

In a beautifully worked move, Shkvyrin slipped the ball through the defence to Ilkhom Sharipov who placed it perfectly in front of Sergey Lebedev rushing in from the left.

Lebedev hit the ball first time, forcing a great diving save from Shimokawa who was forced to palm the ball away for a corner.

But such moments were few and far between as Japan laid siege on the Uzbekistan goal.

Norio Omura should have got Japan's second in the 27th minute when he beat the Uzbekistan off-side trap but the 27-year-old took so long to shoot that the defence were able to recover and clear.

But 11 minutes later there was no such dithering when a far post header by Motohiro Yamaguchi found Kazuyoshi Miura, who became the first

Japanese player to play in the Italian Serie A with Genoa three years ago, who headed home from two yards out.

While Uzbekistan tried everything to pull back the arrears the Japanese defence never looked like cracking against a side severely lacking in ideas.

Just to rub salt into the Uzbekistan wounds, Masakiyo Maezono scored twice in the final five minutes.

The first from a free kick on the left edge of the area, the second, when he lobbed the ball over Bashkevich before hitting in to an empty net.

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## Asian officials upset over stay-at-home crowds

AL AIN (AFP) — Asian Football Confederation General Secretary Peter Velappan has severely criticised the UAE public for failing to support the Asian Cup.

The tournament, the showcase of Asian football, has been playing to near empty grounds.

Five minutes before the kick-off of the Group B clash between Japan and Uzbekistan Monday there were less than 1,000 people in the 15,000 seater Tahnoon Ben Mohammad Al Nahyan Stadium.

"When you invite somebody home you do not go on holiday," said Velappan.

"When the home team is playing in the opening match against one of the best teams in Asia there must be a reason why people do not want to come," he added.

Officials have blamed the wide television coverage but Velappan is unimpressed.

"Locals must support football otherwise it is impossible to motivate the players," he warned.

The 77,000 seater Abu Dhabi main stadium was half empty when the UAE played South Korea to open the tournament last week and even when the Saudi team, which is playing in Dubai, have

appeared the crowds have been bad.

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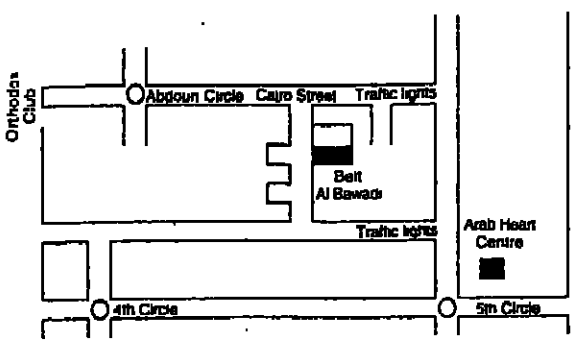
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# Muasher to visit Israel today with Kabariti's message for Netanyahu

*Information minister to also meet with Levy, Mordechai and Labour and Israeli Arab parliamentarians*

**Jordan sees Israeli settlement policy as also threat to Kingdom's security**

By P.Vivekanand  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Information Minister Marwan Muasher begins a two-day visit to Israel today carrying a message from Prime Minister Yitzhak Mordechai. During the visit, Dr. Muasher will also meet with the foreign and defence ministers of Israel as well as opposition leaders to discuss means to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process.

Dr. Muasher, who confirmed the visit during a regular press briefing on Monday, declined to comment on the contents of Mr. Kabariti's message to Mr. Netanyahu. But it was believed to contain a reaffirmation of Jordan's demand that Israel live up to its agreement with the Palestinians and quickly move to final status negotiations with them.

The minister restated Jordan's rejection of Israel's policy of building settlements in the occupied territories.

"Jordan's position is very clear in this regard," he said. "We oppose Israel's settlement policy, which we see not only as greatly undermining the peace process and Palestinian rights but also as posing a direct threat and challenge to Jordan's security and stability."

Dr. Muasher did not elaborate.

rate. But the reference to Jordan's security and stability was seen as alluding to the possible displacement of Palestinians from the occupied territories to make room for Jewish settlements and of a violent Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the settlement policy which in turn could trigger a Palestinian exodus.

Dr. Muasher's comment came in response to a question over a reported Israeli campaign to convince the international community that Jewish settlement of the West Bank and Gaza was legitimate.

Reiterating that Jordan was "willing to do whatever it can to advance the peace process," the minister said he was also scheduled to meet with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai as well as members of the Knesset (MKs) representing the opposition Labour Party and Arab parties.

Such meetings, said Dr. Muasher, a former ambassador to Israel, are part of Jordan's policy of continued political contacts with all Israeli parties.

Asked whether Jordan favoured a "national unity" government in Israel, he said: "It is not a Jordanian concern. It is purely an internal Israeli affair."

Reports from Israel have said that behind-the-scenes contacts were under way between the ruling Likud

bloc, which holds 32 seats in the Knesset, and the Labour Party, which has 34 seats, on a possible coalition government.

Such a coalition, political pundits argue, could have a positive effect on prospects for a just settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, given the pro-peace approach of the Labour Party.

A Labour entry into the Netanyahu government will also do away with Mr. Netanyahu's dependence on extreme right wing and religious parties for parliament majority.

Dr. Muasher's visit to Israel follows strong Jordanian criticism of the hardline policies of Mr. Netanyahu.

His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Kabariti, in comments to the media last week, said Jordan was frustrated over the stalemate in the peace process.

The King voiced concern that the deadlock could fuel extremism in the region and said he hoped for flexibility and vision on the part of Mr. Netanyahu to ensure the success of Mideast peacemaking after having given him ample time to meet the requirements of peace.

Mr. Kabariti implicitly accused Mr. Netanyahu of saying something and doing something else.



**COPEX EXHIBITION:** His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, commander of the Special Forces, is briefed on items on display at an exhibition he opened at the Amman International Motor Show hall on Monday. The exhibition, which is organised with the close involvement of the Special Forces, includes special equipment, surveillance devices vehicles and small arms for use by Special Forces, police, customs and border guards (Photo by Yousef Allan)

## Jordan sees continuity in Clinton nominations

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan sees in the nominations made by U.S. President Bill Clinton to his second-term administration as a continuation of the U.S. policy vis-a-vis the Middle East peace process and looks forward to working closely with Washington towards achieving comprehensive peace in the region.

Information Minister Marwan Muasher said.

It was the first comment by a member of the Council of Ministers of the nominations made by President Clinton on Thursday.

The nominations included Madeleine Albright, ambassador to the U.N., as secretary of state to succeed Warren Christopher and Samuel Berger, deputy national security advisor, as national security advisor to succeed Anthony Lake, who was named Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief. All three nominations need to be confirmed by the Senate.

Retiring Republican Senator William Cohen was named defence secretary.

In comments to the press at a weekly briefing on Monday, Dr. Muasher noted that "none of the new appointees is stranger to the Middle East peace process."

He noted that Ms. Albright, who will be the first woman secretary of state in U.S. history, enjoyed full cabinet rank in the Clinton administration despite being only an ambassador and described her and Mr. Berger as being close to Middle East peacemaking.

"We see in the nominations a continuation of the

U.S. policy (vis-a-vis) the Middle East peace process," said Dr. Muasher. "They (nominations) are well versed (in Middle Eastern affairs) and we look forward to continuing to work with the U.S. towards the successful conclusion of the Middle East peace process."

The nomination of Ms. Albright, known for her tough statements during Security Council debates on Iraq as well as for articulating the U.S. opposition to a new term for Boutros Ghali as secretary-general, has drawn scepticism from some Arab quarters over prospects of U.S. support for Arab rights in Middle East peacemaking.

Israel was among the first in the Middle East to welcome Ms. Albright's nomination. Israeli media described Ms. Albright as Israel's "first choice" as secretary of state to succeed Mr. Christopher, who invested considerable time and efforts to bring Israel and Arabs closer to peace.

Foreign Minister Amr Musa said last week that the Arabs were not worried about Ms. Albright's disposition. "We are more worried about the policies of (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu" in terms of the future of the Middle East peace process, Mr. Musa was quoted as saying.

Ms. Albright and Mr. Christopher have launched a transition process ahead of the Jan. 20 assumption of office by the former as secretary of state.

## Lebanon ready to sign defence deal with Iran

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Lebanon is prepared to sign a military cooperation agreement with Iran if the Middle East peace process fails to make headway, Lebanon's defence minister says.

"I would be happy to sign a pact with Iran," Mohsen Dalloul told the Farsi-language newspaper Iran.

"It is natural that any time it is expedient for Iran and Lebanon, they will do even more than signing a pact," Mr. Dalloul said in the interview published Sunday.

Mr. Dalloul was responding to a question about whether he was willing to sign a military agreement with Iran if peace talks with Israel failed. But he did not elaborate on other cooperation.

Despite his comments, Lebanon does not want to be seen as moving too close to Iran, which the United States considers a rogue state. Lebanon's government has pressed Washington to lift a nine-year-old ban on travel by Americans to Lebanon.

The ban was imposed amid kidnappings and attacks on Americans and other Westerners in Beirut by pro-Iranian militants.

Peace talks between Lebanon and Israel have made little headway since they began in 1991.

### Israel says Iran sent arms to Hizbollah

An Israeli newspaper said Monday Iran has stepped up shipments of arms via Syria to militias in Lebanon to support the guerrilla movements' battle against Israeli occupation forces in South Lebanon.

A senior Israeli army official was quoted in the independent Haaretz newspaper as saying dozens of Iranian cargo planes loaded with weapons and other equipment had landed at Damascus airport in the past five months.

With Syrian help, the goods were shipped by truck to the Hizbollah militia and units of Iran's Revolutionary Guards based in Lebanon's Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley, the official was quoted as saying.

Much of the weaponry was anti-tank missiles, he said. The official accused Syria of having decided to give Iran more freedom to support Hizbollah actions against Israel as part of efforts to press for Israeli concessions in peace negotiations which have been frozen since March.

Iran has also stepped up financial support to cover the pay of Hizbollah fighters and improve the movement's infrastructure in southern Lebanon following the devastating Israeli artillery and air campaign against the movement in April, the official was quoted as saying.

The Israeli intelligence services estimate that Hizbollah rules politically and militarily over 90 per cent of the overwhelmingly Shiite Muslim population of southern Lebanon.

The movement says its goal is to force Israel and its proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army, to withdraw from the buffer zone occupied by Israel in southern Lebanon since the early 1980s.

## Arabs call on Israel to rejoin talks on displaced

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians urged Israel on Monday to resume multilateral negotiations on the fate of displaced Palestinians after Israel failed to attend the latest round of talks.

"The Arab parties call on Israel to resume its participation in the multilateral commission so it can complete its duties," the delegations said in a joint statement at the close of the two-day session.

They said they were "saddened" that the session was not held in Bethlehem, its original venue, "due to Israel's decision not to participate in the meeting."

The session, which was the first round of the multilateral talks in nine months, was moved to Gaza after Israel announced it would not attend "for technical reasons."

"Ever since the new Israeli government (of right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu) came to power, they have been stalling on most levels of the peace process," the Palestinian delegation head Zuhdi Al Said told journalists.

Israel denied at the start of the two-day session on Sunday that its absence

was due to "any desire to avoid discussions or issues."

The committee on the displaced was supposed to meet monthly after it was created by the 1991 Madrid conference which launched the Israeli-Arab peace process.

But its sessions did not start until a year and half after Madrid and it had not convened since its sixth round, held in Cairo last March.

The committee deals with the return of Palestinians who were driven from their homes when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 and whose return is called for under the Oslo self-rule accord.

But Israel and the Arab countries have not yet agreed on a definition for either category or the number of Palestinians which would fall into them. Israel puts their number at 200,000, while the Palestinians say they number 800,000.

The separate issue of Palestinian refugees who lost their homes when Israel was created in 1948 is to be dealt with under final status talks which have been suspended since a symbolic opening session in May.

## Israel reportedly seeking to 'legitimise' colonies through diplomatic push

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's foreign ministry has sent its embassies a document arguing that Jewish settlement in the occupied territories is legal, an initiative designed to counter widespread international criticism of the government's settlement policy, officials said Monday.

A ministry official said the document affirms that the government's decision to expand Jewish settlements "does not violate international law because such activity was authorised by the British mandate authorities" who controlled Palestine prior to the creation of the Jewish state in 1948.

The ministry brief adds that "for centuries Jews have been constantly present on their ancestral lands," according to excerpts published Monday in the Haaretz newspaper and confirmed by a ministry official.

It also rejects claims that the settlements in territories seized by Israel in the 1967 war are a violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention concerning protection of residents in occupied territories.

"The state of Israel has never acknowledged a military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, although it has agreed to respect human rights in these territories where Jews have as much right to settle as anywhere else," according to the document.

Finally, the ministry notes that the Oslo interim accords on Palestinian autonomy does not prohibit continued settlement activity during the five-

year duration of the agreements and that such activity "does not pre-empt the final status" of the territories.

The Oslo self-rule agreement prohibits either side from taking unilateral political actions in the territories during the interim period, but the ministry document said this referred only to such moves as the annexation of lands by Israel or the proclamation of an independent state by the Palestinians.

It also insisted that all Israeli building had taken place on lands which had been declared "state property" after "careful verification that they were subject to no private property titles."

The right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu won election in May with the strong support of settlers and religious movements. In August, Mr. Netanyahu announced that he was lifting a four-year freeze on most settlement activity and would permit the "natural growth" of the 145 Jewish communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The move sparked angry protests from the Palestinians and criticism from foreign governments, including the United States, the European Union and Russia.

The PNA released a report earlier this month saying that Israel had confiscated half the land surface of the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967 to build settlements, military facilities and roads for settlers.

## 'Iran tests Chinese missiles'

DUBAI (R) — The Iranian navy has for the first time fired a Chinese-built C-802 anti-ship missile from one of its 10 Houdong patrol boats during exercises in the Gulf last month, Western military officials said on Monday.

They said Iran had fired the C-802 missile in January but that last month's test was the first one from the Chinese-built Houdong, which Iran had received fitted to fire the missile.

"They successfully fired the C-802 from one of the Chinese Houdong patrol boats at the end of the exercises," one said.

Iran had said during the 10-day exercises in November that it had successfully fired missiles, tested long-range rocket launchers and staged electronic warfare exercises in the Gulf.

It made no mention of the C-802, but said the navy scored precise hits with the updated version of the HY-2 Silkworm missile known as Pirooz-75 (Victory-75).

Some 100 ships, including destroyers, gunboats, hovercraft and Iran's two Russian-built submarines, backed by 40 planes and helicopters took part in the exercises.

U.S. officials had said Iran's acquisition of the radar-guided C-802 missiles, which they expect to be eventually operational on about 20 Iranian vessels, was a new dimension in the naval threat in the oil-rich region.

The United States which accuses Iran of sponsoring state terrorism — has expressed growing concern since the 1991 Gulf war about what it describes as Iran's growing military capability and its aims in the region.

## U.S. troops leave Kuwait this month

KUWAIT (R) — U.S. troops deployed in Kuwait during Washington's September standoff with Baghdad will complete their pullout from the emirate in mid-December, a U.S. embassy spokeswoman said on Monday.

"They have started to leave," said the spokeswoman. Their multi-stage departure will last "until about Dec. 15."

Former U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry said in November the United States had decided to remove 4,200 American troops from Kuwait by Christmas but would maintain 1,800 Marines aboard ships off-shore.

## Ekeus meets Iraqi officials in bid to remove missile parts

BAGHDAD (AFP) — U.N. disarmament chief Rolf Ekeus prepared for a fresh round of talks on Monday aimed at persuading Iraq to surrender missile parts it has withheld from United Nations inspectors.

Mr. Ekeus held talks with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, Oil Minister Amer Rashid and other officials after arriving here Sunday for a four-day mission, the official newspapers said without elaborating.

Joining the group were the foreign ministry Under-secretary Riad Qaisan and an advisor to President Saddam Hussein, Amer Saadi, the papers said.

Mr. Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission on Disarmament (UNSCOM), is leading a group of seven U.N. officials, including veteran inspector Nikita Smidovich, a Russian ballistic missile expert.

Iraq last month prevented inspectors from transferring to New York for analysis more than 70 parts, including engines, from a missile site after allowing around 70 others to be moved to UNSCOM's Baghdad monitoring centre.

The remaining parts are under U.N. surveillance at the missile site, according to U.N. officials.

UNSCOM still suspects Iraq of possessing between six and 16 missiles with a range of more than 150 kilometres.

The United States on Friday warned Iraq against blocking the work of U.N. arms inspectors, saying that Washington would respond "firmly" to any provocation.

Under U.N. resolutions ending the 1991 Gulf war to free Kuwait, Iraq must dismantle its weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles before the oil embargo can be lifted. Oil and trade sanctions were imposed on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

## Wanted — Safecracker by Egyptian authorities

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian officials are considering hiring a professional safecracker to crack open a strongbox containing a trove of ancient gold and silver coins, the government daily Al-Akhar said Monday.

The safe, containing 13,431 gold and silver coins from the Ummayyad dynasty which ruled Egypt from 661 A.D. to 750 A.D., was found by workers as they emptied a reading room at the Egyptian documentation centre here last week ahead of restoration work, the daily said. The contents of the safe, which was made in 1933 in Germany in Hitler's weapons factories, were examined last week and it was sealed again. The authorities tried to open it a few days later with no luck and appealed to locksmiths who gave it a try on four successive days, the daily said. Workers at the centre have suggested that the culture ministry find a professional safecracker to pry open the reluctant strongbox, the newspaper said. The culture ministry said it would take up the matter with the interior ministry, the daily added.

**Superstition a life and debt issue for China city**

BEIJING (R) — China's eastern coastal city of Qingdao has decided to ban the manufacture, sale and burning of funeral objects from next year in a bid to curb a resurgence in superstition, the China News Service said on Monday. Residents of the city — world renowned for its Tsingtao beer — would be fined up to 2,000 yuan (\$240) if they burned ghost money and other funeral objects from May 1, 1997, the agency said. Businesses faced fines of up to 10,000 yuan (\$1,200). "The burning of funeral and other superstitious objects along roads, at public squares, on mountains and cemeteries... Pollutes the environment, affects traffic safety and is a fire hazard," it said, quoting a circular issued by the municipal government. Chinese traditionally burn ghost money and paper dolls as offerings to their ancestors and gods. Superstition, virtually eliminated in the years after the atheist communists swept to power in 1949, has staged a comeback in the past two decades along with economic reforms.

**Survey finds Colombian women 'dissatisfied'**

BOGOTA (R) — More than two-thirds of Colombia's single women fake orgasms — twice as many as their married counterparts — according to a survey published on Sunday. In its December launch edition distributed free with the weekly political magazine Cambio 16, women's magazine Mujer said almost 70 per cent of unmarried women in the capital admitted to "faking it." About 40 per cent of wives in the northwestern city of Medellin, Colombia's third largest, lied to their husbands about having climaxed — five per cent higher than the nationwide average for married women. "The fact that women fake their orgasms is a sign that they are too submissive," an unnamed psychoanalyst told Mujer. "These figures show Colombian women have a serious problem. They show sexual dissatisfaction as well as significant inhibitions and mental barriers," she added. The survey interviewed 600 women in Colombia's five main cities. No margin of error was available.

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